

AWARDING ORGANISATION POLICY

COMPLAINTS POLICY (AOP-010)

GQA Qualifications – Our Mission and Values

GQA Qualifications Limited is an Awarding Body for specialist sectors and occupational roles. Our current qualifications cover a wide range of sectors, including the Glass and Fenestration Industries, Construction, Print, Automotive Glazing, Polymers, Nuclear, Chimney Occupations, Paper, Meteorology and Print.

Our aim is to work with industries where we have access to knowledge either within GQA or by developing strong working relationships with sector specialists, giving us a real ability to discuss specific qualifications with both centres and employers.

Qualification development is carried out in accordance with regulatory and Sector Skill Council requirements, using industry experts throughout the development and consultation processes.

At GQA, our purpose is simple: to add life to a lifetime of learning. We believe that every learning opportunity is a chance for a personal breakthrough. That's why our colleagues are committed to creating vibrant and enriching learning experiences designed for real-life impact.

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1. Policy scope and purpose

GQA is committed to providing the best products and services for its learners and centres.

This document details how a learner registered on a GQA qualification, an apprentice registered with GQA for their End-point assessment or their employer, or an approved GQA centre can make a complaint about the service or products offered by GQA or its representatives.

This document applies to all GQA qualifications and End Point Assessments which are regulated by the following:

- Ofqual-regulated qualifications and units
- Qualification Wales
- CCEA Northern Ireland
- SQA Scotland.

2. Definitions

Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a GQA product or service, or the delivery of an Open Awards product by one of its approved centres

Complainant

A complainant is the person submitting the complaint.

3. Policy statement

This document is intended for the following groups:

- All staff at GQA approved centres
- Learners registered on GQA qualifications at an approved GQA centre
- Apprentices registered with GQA for End-point assessment
- Employers of apprentices registered with GQA for End-point assessment and their employers

GQA is dedicated to delivering high-quality products and services. However, we acknowledge that there may be instances where our offerings do not meet the expectations of our stakeholders, including learners, apprentices, centres, and employers.

GQA encourages complaints and considers feedback as a crucial component for the continuous enhancement of our products and services. Our objective is to improve our customer service.

GQA strives to address complaints promptly and will typically aim to resolve them informally.

To submit a complaint regarding any aspect of our service, please initially contact the customer service team, who will endeavour to rectify the situation promptly. All complaints will be managed with sensitivity and efficiency.

If a complaint cannot be resolved informally, a detailed written complaint should be submitted via email. Please include comprehensive details of the complaint, such as:

- the full name of the complainant
- contact information, including a daytime telephone number
- a complete description of the complaint (including dates and times if applicable)
- when the complainant became aware of the issue
- the nature of the affected service
- the GQA product/service involved (if relevant), and where applicable, details of any investigation conducted by the centre including evidence of the outcome
- copies of any supporting documents (e.g., papers, emails, or letters) related to the complaint

Learner complaints concerning a GQA approved centre will only be considered after the learner has exhausted the centre's own complaints procedures and can provide evidence of this when submitting the complaint to GQA.

Please note, that this does not apply to the End-point assessment of apprentices. Complaints regarding the End-point assessment services provided by GQA must be directed to GQA.

Where a learner is complaining about a centre, the complaint must be received by GQA *within 20 working days* of the complainant receiving the outcome of their complaint against the centre.

Complaints about products or services directly provided by GQA must be submitted to GQA *within 20 working days* of the event occurring.

GQA will acknowledge receipt *within 5 working days* and will advise the complainant whether the complaint is in or out of scope.

Complaints will normally be investigated by a GQA manager not directly responsible for the product or service against which the complaint is being made.

GQA will normally provide a full response *within 10 working days* of receipt of the complaint. If the issues raised are more complex or involve staff who are unavailable, it may take longer to investigate; if this is the case you will be advised as to when you can expect to respond.

Appeals against a decision made by GQA is covered by the Appeals Policy (AOP-16). Should a complaint be submitted which is in fact an enquiry or an appeal, GQA will confirm the basis on which the issue is being addressed.

If an individual is unhappy about the way an assessment has been conducted and suspects that malpractice may have occurred, the concern should be sent to GQA in accordance with the arrangements detailed in our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy (AOP-07).

4. Confidentiality and whistleblowing

GQA understands that some complainants may prefer anonymity. We will investigate anonymous reports, but try to confirm allegations through separate investigations before addressing them.

For anonymous complaints, the investigation outcome will be confidential, and we cannot provide details on actions taken. We encourage complainants to reveal their identity and contact information, assuring confidentiality if requested.

We are not obligated to disclose information if it breaches confidentiality or legal duties. We handle whistle-blower complaints according to relevant legislation.

5. Internal Reviews

Should any part of a complaint lead GQA to discover a failure in its processes, all necessary steps will be taken to:

- identify other learners/apprentices affected by the failure
- correct or, where correction is not possible, mitigate the effects of the failure as much as possible
- ensure the failure does not recur

If the outcome of a complaint raises concerns about the validity of results at a centre, GQA will act to protect the interests of other learners/apprentices and the integrity of the qualifications and/or units awarded.

Actions may include:

- Further review of learners' work by GQA, potentially requesting up to a 100% sample for verification
- Review of the unit(s) of assessment through its unit review process
- Review of the rules of combination for a qualification (if appropriate)

The Responsible Officer will decide on the most appropriate course of action, in consultation with the AOQB (Awarding Organisation Quality Board) and the Chief Executive Officer.

GQA will inform the relevant regulator immediately of any adverse effects and other instances where such action is required.

6. Exclusions

Vexatious correspondence or behaviour

GQA staff will not engage with persistent or abusive complainants. If a complainant is abusive or repeatedly contacts GQA without new information, such behaviour will be seen as **vexatious**.

Vexatious behaviour includes:

- Being abusive or threatening during calls, meetings, or in writing
- Repeatedly contacting GQA without new evidence
- Making unreasonable demands beyond the investigation's scope
- Making accusatory remarks about GQA or its representatives

Such cases will be referred to the GQA Responsible Officer and the Chief Executive Officer.

Zero Tolerance

GQA is dedicated to providing prompt, courteous, clear, and responsive service to its customers. To achieve the highest standard of service, GQA prioritises the well-being of both its staff and customers.

Customers are expected to treat others and our staff with the same level of courtesy they would like to receive.

Verbal abuse, harassment, disruptive behaviour, and violence are strictly prohibited. Should any such incidents occur, GQA will take appropriate action, which may include withholding services or pursuing legal prosecution.

7. Related documents

AOP – 09	Whistleblowing policy
GQA 414-2025	Complaints procedure
AOP-16	Appeals Policy

8. Regulatory references

Regulator	Regulatory or guidance source	Regulatory condition, criteria or principle
OFQUAL	General Conditions of Recognition	A4, A6, A7, A8
OFQUAL	General Conditions of Recognition	B3
OFQUAL	General Conditions of Recognition	C1, C2
OFQUAL	General Conditions of Recognition	G4
OFQUAL	General Conditions of Recognition	H2
OFQUAL	General Conditions of Recognition	I2
SQA	Regulatory Principles (2021)	6, 16, 17

9. Policy reference information

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