

Complaints Policy

Introduction

This document explains Training Qualifications UK's complaints procedures and is provided for approved TQUK centres, learners and all interested parties who encounter a direct or indirect service from TQUK.

TQUK value all centres delivering our qualifications and the learners who undertake them and our aim, every day, is to exceed the expectations of our customers.

If an approved centre or customer feels that they have encountered a level of service that is below their expectations, that concern should be raised with TQUK immediately. This is so that any issues or concerns can be addressed and we can improve.

TQUK Internal Responsibility

The Quality Assurance Department is responsible for the maintenance and compliance of this policy. If the Quality Manager is absent the Managing Director would appoint another member of the SMT to ensure all TQUK actions and activities are in line with the content of this policy.

Scope

This policy covers complaints learners, members of the public or centres may wish to make in relation to the qualifications and associated services offered by TQUK.

It is not to be used to cover enquiries about services offered by TQUK or appeals in relation to decisions made by TQUK. These areas are covered by TQUK's Appeals Policy. Should a complaint be submitted, which is in fact an appeal, TQUK will respond to inform the relevant party that the issue is being considered in accordance with TQUK's Appeals Policy.

If a centre, learner or customer is unhappy about the way an examination or assessment was delivered or conducted, and they suspect malpractice may have occurred, they must inform TQUK. This will be investigated in accordance with TQUK's Malpractice/Maladministration Policy.

See Appendix 1 for definitions

Centre Responsibility

TQUK suggest that centre staff members involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of TQUK qualifications, and learners, are made aware of the contents of the policy. An approved centre must have a complaints handling procedure and appeals process in place.

Review Arrangements

We will review the policy annually as part of our self-evaluation process and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer and learner feedback or requests. We may also update this policy as part of good practice guidance issued by the regulatory authorities (e.g. to align with any appeals and complaints processes established by the regulatory authorities such as Ofqual).

The annual review of this policy will be undertaken by the Quality Assurance Department approximately four weeks prior to the submission of TQUK's Statement of Compliance to Ofqual. Any amendments or updates to this policy will be approved by TQUK's SMT.

If you have any points or feedback regarding this policy, please contact us via the details provided at the end of this policy.

How should I complain?

All TQUK staff members have been trained to help customers. If a centre, learner or customer has a complaint, they should first try to sort out any problem at the earliest opportunity, by speaking to a staff member of TQUK.

If preferred, a centre, learner or customer can request to speak to a TQUK Manager.

If this is not possible, or if the help provided by the manager is not satisfactory, please send a written complaint, (we would normally expect this to be within two weeks of the event taking place that the complaint is regarding), and address it to the Quality Assurance Department using the contact details outlined at the end of this policy.

Anyone wishing to make a complaint against a TQUK centre must first exhaust the complaints procedure with the specific TQUK centre. If all channels have been explored, learners can make a direct complaint to the Quality Assurance Department at TQUK's Head Office.

If I complain what details do I have to give?

TQUK will request the complainant's full name, contact details including a daytime telephone number along with:

- a full description of your complaint (including the subject matter and dates and times if known)
- any names of the people you have dealt with so far
- copies of any papers or letters to do with the complaint.

Complaints brought to our attention by the regulators

Where the regulators notify TQUK about failures that have been discovered in the assessment process or other activities of another awarding organisation, these will be reviewed in the same manner as other external complaints in accordance with the procedures below, to ascertain if the same issue could affect TQUK qualifications.

Confidentiality and whistle blowing

TQUK will investigate any issues or complaints that are reported anonymously.

TQUK will consider each disclosure of information sensitively and carefully, and decide upon an appropriate response.

TQUK will always aim to keep a whistleblower's identity confidential when asked to do so, although we cannot guarantee this and we may need to disclose identity to:

- the police, fraud prevention agencies or other law enforcement agencies (to investigate or prevent crime, including fraud)
- the courts (in connection with court proceedings) another person to whom we are required by law to disclose your identity.
- other third parties where we consider it necessary to do so (eg the regulator Ofqual).

A whistleblower should also recognise that he or she may be identifiable by others due to the nature or circumstances of the disclosure (e.g. the party which the allegation is made against may manage to identify possible sources of disclosure without such details being disclosed to them).

In most cases, TQUK will keep a complainant updated as to the progress of any allegation (e.g. if an investigation is being undertaken). TQUK will not disclose details of an investigation. In addition, it may not be appropriate for TQUK to disclose full details of the outcomes of any investigation, due to confidentiality or legal reasons.

What will happen to my complaint?

TQUK will acknowledge receipt of a complaint within 48 hours, with details of who is investigating the complaint.

TQUK will investigate any complaint within 10 working days. If a complaint is more complex, or involves people who are not available at the time, this may be extended to 15 working days. TQUK may contact any person involved within this period to seek further information or clarification. At the end of the investigation TQUK shall write/email to inform the complainant of the decision.

What happens if my complaint is upheld?

If any part of a complaint is upheld TQUK will respond to the complainant accordingly and give due consideration to how any improvement can be made in the future. For example, by reviewing procedures to assess the impact on TQUK arrangements and assessment process (if relevant) or arranging for staff training. In extreme circumstances, internal disciplinary procedures may be exercised where the performance or behaviour of TQUK staff members is deemed inappropriate.

In situations where a complaint has been successful and indicates a failure in TQUK assessment processes, appropriate action will be taken. This may include:

- (a) identifying any other learner who has been affected by that failure,
- (b) correcting, or where it cannot be corrected, mitigating as far as possible the effect of the failure, and
- (c) ensuring that the failure does not recur in the future.
- (d) reviewing planned monitoring frequency of the centre, if an upheld complaint related to a centre, to ascertain if increased monitoring and/or support should be applied

What if I am not happy with the reply?

If a complainant disagrees with a decision, this can be discussed with TQUK's Quality Assurance Department.

If the complainant is still unhappy with the decision taken by TQUK in reviewing the complaint, they can then take the matter through TQUK's appeal arrangements which are outlined in the Appeals Policy.

Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact TQUK on 03333 583344, email customerservice@tquk.org or visit our website www.tquk.org

Appendix 1

Academic Appeals, Procedural Appeals and Complaints

	Definition	Example
Academic Appeal	<p>The term academic appeal relates to a learner believing that any piece of their work or assessment activity has been conducted or assessed unfairly, inconsistently or not in accordance with the outlined standards of a given apprenticeship assessment plan or specification of a qualifications awarding organisation.</p> <p>Learner retain the right at all times to appeal against an assessment decision made. This may be for a single assessment or against an overall grade or final outcome.</p>	<p>This may include a learner believing that the grade awarded to their submitted work or assessment performance does not sufficiently reflect the level of knowledge, skill and ability they believe they demonstrated.</p>
Malpractice	<p>This term relates to any activity or practice which occurs through deliberate actions, neglect or default of other practice contravenes regulations and compromises the integrity of the assessment process and/or the validity of certificates.</p>	<p>This may include a learner believing that the way in which a TQUK assessor has conducted an assessment activity hindered their performance or did not fully allow them to best demonstrate their full range of knowledge, skills or ability.</p>
Maladministration	<p>This term describes any activity or practice which results in non-compliance with administrative</p>	<p>This may include a learner believing that a centre has lost or mishandled their assessment evidence in a way</p>

	<p>regulations and requirements. It covers the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration within a centre (e.g. keeping inappropriate learner records).</p>	<p>that would contravene the requirements of the Awarding Organisation.</p>
<p>Procedural Appeal</p>	<p>The term procedural appeal relates to any centre or TQUK customer believing that a process conducted or decision made by TQUK has been done unfairly, inconsistently or not in accordance with outlined and agreed policy or procedures.</p>	<p>This may include decisions relating to a centre's application to deliver a TQUK qualification, a sanction imposed by TQUK following an investigation of malpractice or maladministration or a decision made by TQUK in relation to a centre's request to make a reasonable adjustment or special consideration.</p>
<p>Complaint</p>	<p>The term complaint relates to any centre or TQUK customer feeling dissatisfied with the level of service and believes it is below their expectation levels or that outlined by TQUK.</p>	<p>This may include a centre not receiving sufficient levels of support as per their request or having their request dealt with in a timely manner.</p>