

Customer complaint management

Policy

Audience

Agency-wide

Purpose

The policy sets the direction for customer complaint management at the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA). It enables the QCAA to meet its requirements under the:

- *Public Sector Act 2022*, section 264
- *Human Rights Act 2019*
- Australian Standard 10002:2022, *Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organisations*
- Queensland Public Service, *Customer Complaint Management Framework* and *Customer Complaint Management Guideline*.

The policy is supported by the *Customer Complaint Management Procedure*, which outlines the roles and responsibilities for customer complaint management at the QCAA.

Policy statement

The QCAA values all complaints and is committed to effective complaint management by ensuring that complaints are managed in an accountable and fair manner that is compatible with human rights. Our complaint management system enables us to provide clear, timely and accurate responses to complaints.

Principles

This policy and associated procedures are underpinned by the following principles:

Principle	What this means for the agency
Customer focus	People can make a complaint via a clear and accessible complaint management system, with complainants respected and responses addressing all issues raised.
Timeliness and fairness	Our complaint-handling processes are clear, impartial and confidential, with timely acknowledgments and responses.
Clear communication	Clearly communicated expectations and standards are provided to all parties involved in a complaint.
Accountability	QCAA roles and responsibilities for complaint management are clear and publicly available.
Service improvement	Complaints improve existing, and inform new, quality services with our complaint management system helping to prevent potential ongoing disputes.

Scope

1. What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the service or action of the QCAA, or QCAA staff, by a person who is directly affected by the service or action, and includes issues related to:

- a decision made, or a failure to make a decision, by a QCAA employee
- an act, or failure to act, by the QCAA
- an act or decision that is not compatible with human rights specified under the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld)
- a proposal or intention formulated by the QCAA
- a recommendation made by the QCAA
- the customer service provided by an employee of the QCAA.

2. What is not a complaint?

The QCAA is contacted for many reasons, and most of the time it is not a complaint. It is not a complaint when someone:

- requests more information about an act we have undertaken, or failed to undertake
- requests a change in products or services or requests a new service
- makes a suggestion for improving our products or services
- expresses a concern about a situation
- provides feedback on our performance
- is not directly affected by a decision we have made or an action we have undertaken
- provides information, e.g. reports an incident
- asks for more information about processes and procedures.

The customer complaint management system does not cover complaints about information privacy, right to information, public interest disclosures, employee complaints, or matters specifically dealt with through other legislative and/or appeal processes. These matters have their own legislation and associated policies and procedures for their management. The QCAA complaint management system also does not apply to complaints subject to legal proceedings.

Complaint management model

The QCAA has a three-tier model for complaint management, consisting of initial complaint handling, internal review and external review (AS 10002:2022, p. 38).

We communicate our decision about a complaint to the complainant as soon as possible following our assessment or investigation (within 30 business days from the date the complaint was received). We explain the factors considered in the decision when communicating our decision.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with our decision, they can apply for an internal review within 20 business days of the decision being received. We communicate the outcome of the internal

review to the complainant as soon as possible (within 20 business days from the date the application was received).

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal review, they can ask for an external review by the Queensland Ombudsman or Queensland Human Rights Commission.

Continuous improvement

The QCAA values continuous improvement in administration and strives to ensure strong relationships with the community through feedback to staff about the general nature and outcome of complaints.

We use formal, documented processes to manage complaints and identify themes and trends in complaints. This information and feedback from community and staff is used to inform improvements to service delivery, policy and operations.

Monitoring and review

The QCAA regularly reviews the effectiveness of the complaint management system, and revises and improves it if necessary.

Information on trends and systemic issues is provided to senior management.

Complaint information is published by the QCAA on an annual basis.

Lodging a complaint

Wherever possible, complaints should be submitted in writing (hard copy or electronically) to:

Chief Executive Officer
Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority
PO Box 307
Spring Hill QLD 4004
Email: confidential@qcaa.qld.edu.au
Phone: (07) 3864 0299

We also accept verbal and anonymous complaints.

All complaints are treated confidentially and in accordance with the privacy principles contained in the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld).

There are no fees or charges to the complainant for complaints lodged with the QCAA.

Definitions

The following definitions are provided by the Queensland Public Service *Customer Complaint Management Guideline*.

Customer complaint	<p>means a complaint about the service or action of a public sector entity, or its staff, by a person who is apparently directly affected by the service or action. Examples of customer complaints include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a complaint about a decision made, or a failure to make a decision, by a public sector employee of the public sector entity • a complaint about an act, or failure to act, of the public sector entity • a complaint about an act or decision that is not compatible with human rights specified under the <i>Human Rights Act 2019</i> (Qld) • a complaint about the formulation of a proposal or intention of the public sector entity • a complaint about the making of a recommendation by the public sector entity • a complaint about the customer service provided by a public sector employee of the public sector entity.
Complaint management system	consists of all policies, procedures, practices, systems, staff and resources used to manage complaints within an agency (AS 10002:2022).
Complainant	is a person or their representative, or an organisational representative who makes a complaint to an agency. A representative must be authorised to make the complaint on behalf of the person or organisation, e.g. parent/ or relative/person with enduring power of attorney, or officer of an organisation.
Customer	is a person or organisation who is directly affected by a service or action by an agency.
Employee	<i>Employee</i> is defined as permanent, temporary and casual staff, as outlined in section 9(1) of the <i>Public Service Act 2008</i> (Qld).
External review	is a process available for specific types of complaints where an oversight agency, such as the Queensland Ombudsman, or other complaints-handling organisation, investigates the handling of a complaint by an agency or deals with complaints that were previously the subject of a complaint to an agency. An external review will only occur after the complainant has progressed through the agency's complaint process in the first instance and exhausted any other internal right of review.
Internal review	is a merits review that involves a consideration of whether, based on the information/facts available at the time, the decision made was the correct one (including whether the actions and decisions were lawful, reasonable, fair and not improperly discriminatory). It is not a re-investigation of the complaint; it is an impartial review of a decision made about a complaint undertaken by an appropriate officer independent from the original decision-maker.

Legislation

- [Human Rights Act 2019](#) (Qld)
- [Information Privacy Act 2009](#) (Qld)
- [Public Sector Act 2022](#) (Qld).

Authorisations

Section 264 of the *Public Sector Act 2022* requires the QCAA to establish and implement a system for dealing with customer complaints.

The system must enable the agency to:

- manage the receipt, processing and outcome of a customer complaint
- comply with the Australian Standard for customer complaints management
- notify a customer about the outcome of their complaint (unless the complaint was anonymous).

Related QCAA policies and procedures

- [Customer complaint management framework](#)
- [Customer complaint management procedure](#)

Contact

For further information, please contact the Manager, Policy Unit, Strategic Engagement Branch, Strategy, Planning and Corporate Support Division at QCAASecretariat@qcaa.qld.edu.au.

Review date

The *Customer complaint management policy* will be reviewed every three years or earlier if required. The next review is due in January 2027.

Version history

Version #	Date	Comments	Content Manager number
2.0	17/01/2024	Review to incorporate the requirements of the <i>Public Sector Act 2022</i> and the Queensland Public Service <i>Customer Complaint Management Framework</i> and <i>Customer Complaint Management Guideline</i> .	24/00699
1.0	22/07/2020	Review to incorporate the requirements of the <i>Human Rights Act 2019</i>	20/17089



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1. Queensland Public Service *Customer Complaint Management Framework* and *Customer Complaint Management Guideline*