Complaints management policy
Commitment to complaints management

The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) is committed to delivering quality services that are responsive to the needs of staff, stakeholders, clients, and the wider community. Complaints are a valuable source of feedback and an important tool for business and staff development. Diligent and prompt attention to complaints can help us identify the needs of our clients and stakeholders, understand our business shortcomings, increase client satisfaction and improve overall performance.

The QCAA is therefore committed to effective complaints management by ensuring that complaints are managed fairly, reasonably and in a timely manner.

Scope

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, orally or in writing, about the service or actions of the QCAA or its staff.

If contact with the QCAA is essentially an inquiry (i.e. seeking information) or just a simple query (i.e. asking a question), then such a contact would not constitute a ‘complaint’ under this policy.

The QCAA complaints management policy does not cover complaints regarding information privacy, right to information, public interest disclosures, employee complaints, or matters specifically dealt with through other legislative and or appeal processes. All these matters have their own legislation and associated policies and procedures for their management.

Responsibilities

Officers of QCAA must:
- inform the community via QCAA’s website about the process for managing complaints
- widely promote the complaints management system to the community and stakeholders
- deal with all complaints at the appropriate level in the first instance
- make an accurate record of all complaints
- respond to complaints promptly
- monitor and report on the type of complaints received
- advise complainants of the process for referring unresolved complaints
- accept feedback willingly
- uphold fairness toward complainants and employees throughout the complaint management process.

Complainants must:
- provide the QCAA with details about a complaint
- provide complete and factual information without delay
- not deliberately include false or misleading information
• deliver the complaint in a non-threatening way
• not make frivolous or vexatious complaints.

Principles for complaints management
This policy and associated procedures are underpinned by the following principles.

Visibility and access
Information about QCAA’s complaint management policy and procedures will be published on the internet and intranet sites.

An initial training session will be given to all staff about the complaints management policy and procedures, with subsequent new staff being told about the policy and procedures as part of the induction process.

This training will be included as part of the broader training on ethics.

Reminder information will be given to all staff on at least an annual basis.

Responsiveness
Complainants will be kept informed about the steps involved in the complaints process, estimated time frames and any other factors affecting the progress of a complaint.

The QCAA will aim for timely and meaningful resolution of complaints, recognising that legitimate delays in the assessment/investigation may occur. Where delays are unavoidable, they will be communicated to the complainant.

Assessment and action
All complaints received by the QCAA will be taken seriously and will be handled fairly and objectively without personal bias or partiality.

After receiving a complaint, staff must take reasonable steps to ensure that the complainant is properly understood, which may include seeking clarification or additional information from a complainant.

If a complaint is received outside the scope of the complaints management policy, the complainant will be advised of the correct process for handling their matter.

Where appropriate, complaints and/or complainants will be referred to external agencies on receipt.

If a complaint is made about a person, that person has the right to know the details of the complaint and will be given the opportunity to make a statement of reply.

All people involved in the complaint process have the right to be supported by an appropriate third party.

The QCAA will take reasonable steps to protect personal information from loss, unauthorised access, use, disclosure or any other misuse during the complaints process.

The QCAA is committed to dealing with complaints in a confidential manner that is respectful to both the complainant and the respondent. The information that may be requested to be kept confidential is not limited to ‘personal information’. However, the QCAA cannot give an assurance of absolute confidentiality given its statutory obligations and principles of procedural fairness.
Feedback

Decisions about a complaint are to be communicated to the complainant as soon as possible following the assessment/investigation. When a decision about a complaint is made, the QCAA will explain to the complainant the factors considered in the decision.

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

Where the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision, the complainant will be informed of any further review mechanism that is available.

Monitoring effectiveness

The QCAA will regularly review the effectiveness of the complaints management system, and will revise and improve it if necessary.

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: office@qcaa.qld.edu.au
Ph: (07) 3864 0299
Fax: (07) 3221 2553

Verbal and anonymous complaints will be accepted.

All complaints will be treated confidentially and in accordance with the privacy principles contained in the Information Privacy Act 2009.

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

Definition and terms

Complaint is a generic term referring to the expression of dissatisfaction, orally or in writing, about the service or actions of the QCAA or its staff.

Complainant is a person who lodges a complaint with the QCAA. A complainant may be a student, parent/carer or a member of the community who is aggrieved about a matter.

Employee is defined as permanent, temporary, and casual staff, as outlined in Section 9.1 of the Public Service Act 2008.

References and resources

Public Service Act 2008 — Sections 46 and 53.