

International Centres Guidance on Complaints/Grievance - Criterion 3.6

The SQA wants to ensure that candidates are provided with a complaints/grievance process on matters not directly involving assessment decisions. The procedure can be invoked at any stage of a candidate's qualification and should be used for complaints about any aspect of the programme.

However, complaints about assessment decisions should be processed through the appeals procedure (see criterion 4.8).

Centres' complaints procedures must explain that all candidates have the right to complain to SQA about assessment-related matters (but not assessment judgements), once they have exhausted their centre's complaints procedure.

Centres must have a documented complaints/grievance procedure and must ensure that this is included as part of candidate induction. Reasonable timescales must be attached to each stage of the process.

There should be at least two people with whom candidates can raise complaints with initially. The procedures must also include mechanisms for:

- ◆ Dissemination to candidates
- ◆ Notifying the candidate of outcome and subsequent actions
- ◆ Recording and retaining records

Details of any complaints/grievances should be logged and retained for review by SQA quality assurance staff.

Complaints should also be analysed for trends, to inform quality improvement in the centre. Centres must also inform candidates that SQA can deal with complaints from any candidates about assessment — in the broadest sense, including the conduct of and environment for assessment — but only if the candidate has already exhausted the centre's complaints procedure.

The SQA will not deal with complaints about the wider experience of being a student (eg student support services, funding, student facilities).