

Param Qualifications Complaints Policy and Procedure

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1. Introduction

Param Qualifications is committed to delivering professional, transparent, and reliable services to learners, centres, partners, and other stakeholders. We recognise that concerns or dissatisfaction may occasionally arise and believe that complaints, when handled appropriately, provide an important opportunity to improve systems, services, and organisational effectiveness.

This Complaints Policy sets out a clear and structured process for raising, handling, and resolving complaints relating to the services, administrative processes, conduct, or operational activities of Param Qualifications. The policy ensures that complaints are addressed fairly, consistently, and within reasonable timescales, while protecting the interests of all parties involved.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that complaints are managed in a transparent and proportionate manner. In particular, the policy aims to provide a clear route for raising concerns, ensure complaints are investigated objectively, and support continuous improvement across Param Qualifications.

The policy is designed to:

- enable concerns to be raised without fear of disadvantage
- ensure complaints are handled consistently and fairly
- identify corrective actions where issues are substantiated

Outcomes from complaints are reviewed to strengthen internal processes and prevent recurrence of similar issues.

3. Scope

This policy applies to complaints raised by learners, centres, staff, contractors, partners, or members of the public who have engaged with Param Qualifications. Complaints may relate to service quality, administrative processes, communication, conduct, or the application of organisational procedures.

This policy does not apply to matters that fall under separate procedures, such as challenges to formal decisions or allegations of serious misconduct, which are addressed through other relevant policies. Where a complaint is received that falls outside the scope of this policy, the complainant will be advised of the appropriate process.

4. Equality, Fairness and Accessibility

Param Qualifications Ltd is committed to ensuring that all complaints are handled in a fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory manner, in line with the principles of the Equality Act 2010. The organisation promotes equality of opportunity and will not disadvantage any individual on the basis of protected characteristics, personal circumstances, or support needs.

Where a complainant has a disability, additional learning need, or communication requirement, reasonable adjustments will be considered to ensure equitable access to the complaints process. Information about the availability of reasonable adjustments is communicated clearly to learners and Delivery Centres.

All complaints are reviewed objectively and in line with the organisation's Equality and Diversity Policy, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy, and Safeguarding arrangements where relevant.

Any equality-related themes identified through complaints are monitored as part of the organisation's continuous improvement and governance oversight processes.

5. Reporting and Handling of Complaints

Param Qualifications recognises that complaints may vary in nature and seriousness. To ensure issues are addressed at the most appropriate level, complaints may initially be handled informally before progressing to a formal complaints process where required.

At the informal stage, concerns are raised directly with the relevant staff member or department responsible for the service or activity concerned. This approach is intended to resolve issues promptly through clarification, discussion, or minor corrective action, without the need for escalation. Informal handling is suitable where concerns relate to communication, service delivery, or administrative matters that can reasonably be resolved at this level.

A complaint will progress from informal handling to the formal complaints process where one or more of the following applies:

- the issue is not resolved satisfactorily through informal discussion
- the matter is serious, sensitive, or has wider organisational impact
- the complainant requests that the issue be considered formally

Once treated as a formal complaint, the matter is logged centrally by the administrative or compliance function to ensure consistency and traceability. The complaint is investigated by an authorised individual who has had no prior involvement in the issue, ensuring independence and objectivity. Oversight of the formal complaints process is provided by the Responsible Officer or Director, as appropriate, to confirm that the complaint has been handled fairly and in accordance with organisational procedures.

All complaint handling activity, whether informal or formal, is documented to support transparency, governance oversight, and continuous improvement.

6. Formal Complaints Procedure

Once a complaint is submitted as a formal complaint, Param Qualifications will follow a structured process to ensure the matter is handled fairly, consistently, and within defined timescales.

6.1 Complaints Process Overview

Complaints submitted to Param Qualifications are managed through the following staged process to ensure fairness, consistency and transparency:

Step 1 – Acknowledgement
The formal complaint is acknowledged within three (3) working days and logged for review.

Step 2 – Investigation
An independent authorised individual reviews the complaint, gathers relevant evidence and assesses the matter objectively.

Step 3 – Outcome Notification
A written outcome is issued to the complainant normally within fifteen (15) working days of acknowledgement.

Step 4 – Extension (where required)
Where additional time is necessary due to complexity, the complainant is informed, and the final outcome is issued within a maximum of thirty (30) working days.

Throughout the formal complaints process, reasonable updates will be provided where appropriate, and all actions and decisions will be documented to ensure transparency and accountability.

7. How to Submit a Formal Complaint

Formal complaints must be submitted in writing to enable a clear and structured investigation. Complainants should submit their written complaint using the contact details provided in Contact Information of this policy.

The written complaint should clearly explain the nature of the concern and provide sufficient detail to support investigation, including:

- the complainant's first name and contact details
- relevant dates and background information
- a clear description of the issue
- individuals involved, where applicable
- any supporting documents or correspondence

On receipt of a formal complaint, Param Qualifications will acknowledge the complaint within five (5) working days and will process it in accordance with the formal complaints procedure set out in this policy.

8. Actions Following an Upheld Complaint

Where a complaint is upheld, Param Qualifications will take appropriate and proportionate action to address the issue identified. Actions may include correcting administrative errors, providing clarification or apology, reviewing or improving procedures, or implementing additional guidance or staff training.

Where a complaint highlights a wider or systemic issue, the matter will be reviewed as part of internal governance and continuous improvement processes. All complaint outcomes and actions taken are documented and monitored to ensure effective resolution and follow-up.

9. Relationship with Other Policies

Complaints and appeals are separate processes and are managed under different policies. This Complaints Policy applies to concerns relating to services, administration, communication, or conduct. Where a concern relates to a matter governed by another policy, the complainant will be advised of the appropriate procedure to follow.

10. Confidentiality

All complaints are handled sensitively and confidentially. Information will be shared only where necessary to investigate the complaint or where disclosure is required by law. Personal information is managed securely and appropriately throughout the complaints process.

11. Record Retention

Records of complaints, investigations, correspondence, and outcomes are retained securely for a minimum of five (5) years. Records are maintained to support internal review, governance oversight, and audit requirements.

12. Reporting and Governance Oversight

Complaint records are reviewed periodically to identify trends, recurring issues, and opportunities for improvement. A summary of complaints and outcomes is provided to senior management as part of internal governance arrangements, ensuring appropriate oversight and accountability.

13. Review of Policy

This policy is reviewed annually, or earlier if required due to operational or regulatory changes. Any updates are approved through the appropriate governance process and recorded in the version-control history.

14. Contact Information

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