

Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure

At QAA, we are committed to providing the best possible service, and to working in an open and accountable way. One of the ways in which we continue to improve our service is by listening to the views of our stakeholders.

Purpose

This policy sets out guidelines to ensure that compliments, comments and complaints received by QAA are handled with courtesy, respect and fairness.

Policy

All stakeholders of QAA Access to HE services have access to our policy and procedures via the [QAA website](#).

We will:

- implement the compliments, comments and complaints procedure in an open, transparent and accountable way
- take appropriate action to address views and suggestions
- communicate outcomes of investigation from complaints within **20 working days** from receipt
- aim to deal with any appeals (if applicable) within **15 working days** of receiving a written appeal.

Compliments and comments

In circumstances where you may wish to register a compliment or comment, you can do so by emailing AHE@qaa.ac.uk

All compliments and comments received will be forwarded to our Access Officer. Details of compliments and comments will be shared with relevant members of staff and incorporated into QAA future planning and development sessions. Compliments may be used for marketing purposes - if an individual wishes to contribute, they can do so by stating this in their email.

Complaints

In circumstances where you may wish to register a complaint you can do so by emailing AHE@qaa.ac.uk

We will be able to respond to your complaint more effectively if it is raised promptly and accompanied by supporting information. Please state the area, date and time of incident to which the complaint relates and provide any relevant information on the subject or supporting evidence.

We will:

- handle your complaint with courtesy, respect and fairness
- give full reasons for the outcome
- use the knowledge and experience gained from complaints to improve how we operate.

Timescales

We strive to investigate complaints quickly and thoroughly. In some cases, it will be possible for us to complete our work in less time than the procedure indicates below; in exceptional cases it will take longer.

- Once your complaint has been received, the complaint is logged and acknowledged within **three working days** of receipt.
- Should the complaint fall outside the scope of QAA, you will be advised of this in writing **within five working days** of receipt of complaint.
- QAA will investigate a complaint and seek any further information that may be required. When consideration of your complaint is complete, we will contact you via your preferred means of communication to explain the outcome. We aim to respond to complaints within **20 working days of receipt**. However, if a conclusion cannot be reached within this timeframe, you will be notified in writing of the reasons why.

Complaint about the course delivery and management

If there is a complaint about a particular Access to HE course, this should be raised with the course provider, following published procedures. If the provider cannot resolve the complaint or concern satisfactorily, this should then be investigated by the Access Validating Agency (AVA). If at this point the concern or complaint has not been resolved, then it should be raised with QAA (see Figure 1).

If you wish to find details about your AVA, please go to our course search area:

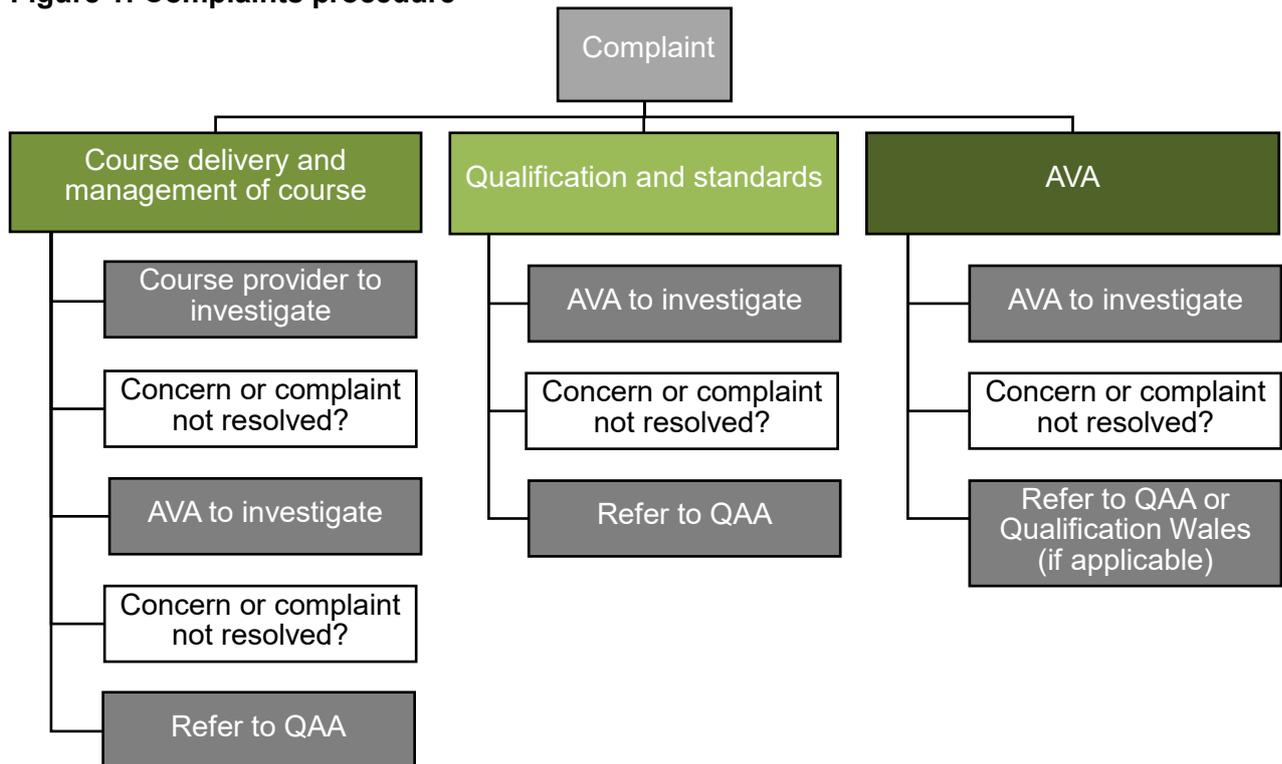
www.qaa.ac.uk/en/about-us/access-to-he/access-to-he-course-search

Complaint about the qualification and standards

If there is a complaint about the qualification, the standards (licensing criteria) or the way in which an AVA is undertaking its responsibilities, this should first be raised with the AVA. If the AVA cannot resolve the complaint, it may then be raised with QAA.

If you are studying your Access to HE course in Wales QAA will notify Qualification Wales of any outcomes of investigations undertaken to address complaints. In addressing some complaints regarding the AVA, Qualification Wales may take the lead in the investigation (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Complaints procedure



Appeals

If you are dissatisfied with the decision, you may appeal against this in writing within **15 working days** of receipt of the outcome letter. Appeals will be heard by the Appeals Panel, which is drawn from the Access Recognition and Licensing Committee, QAA Board and external reviewers. The appeal will be heard within **15 working days** of receipt of the appeal. The outcome of the Appeal will be communicated to you within **five working days** of the Appeals Panel. Please note the conclusions drawn from the panel will be final.

How to make a complaint about QAA

First, you should speak to the person you have been dealing with at QAA, so that they can try to assist and find a resolution.

If you are not satisfied with the explanation you receive, you can contact the Governance and Executive Office in one of the following ways:

- **Telephone** - call +44 (0)1452 557000 to discuss your complaint with a member of the Governance and Executive Office
- **Email** - send details of your complaint to Governance@gaa.ac.uk
- **Post** - send your complaint in writing to Governance and Executive Office, QAA, Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB

Please provide your full name, postal address, telephone number and email address, and how you would prefer us to contact you about your complaint.

For further details regarding how to make a complaint about QAA please go to:
www.qaa.ac.uk/en/reviewing-higher-education/how-to-make-a-complaint/complaints-about-qaa-and-appeals-against-decisions

How to make a whistleblowing disclosure

QAA are committed to considering concerns from all sources. If you choose to make a whistleblowing disclosure, we will ask you to provide evidence to support your disclosure. If you feel uncomfortable about raising your concerns with the provider, AVA or other stakeholders before raising it with us, we may be able to approach directly and can ask for evidence about the issue you are concerned about.

We will consider each disclosure of information sensitively and carefully; however, it may not always be possible to investigate or substantiate anonymous disclosures. Any individual making a whistleblowing disclosure should also recognise that he or she may be identifiable by others due to the nature or circumstances of the disclosure.

Please contact us at AHE@gaa.ac.uk and we can talk to you about our approach including the things we can do to protect your identity.

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www.accesstohe.ac.uk

QAA manages the national framework for the recognition and regulation of Access to HE Diplomas.

www.qaa.ac.uk