

Feedback and Complaints Policy

Policy

Introduction

Gateway Qualifications is committed to providing high-quality products and services and values feedback and complaints as an opportunity to improve our services and overall customer satisfaction. We strive to provide a fair, efficient and effective process, and we aim to resolve your concern without delay, learning any lessons that may arise from the experience.

Purpose

This policy aims to provide customers, learners and apprentices with a clear and consistent approach to providing feedback and raising concerns about Gateway Qualifications' products and services. It also outlines how Gateway Qualifications will handle and respond to such feedback, concerns, and complaints.

Scope

This policy applies to all feedback, concerns and complaints relating to Gateway Qualifications' products and services, including but not limited to:

- Qualifications and assessments: any issues relating to the content, format, delivery, or assessment of qualifications or end-point assessments offered by Gateway Qualifications.
- Certification: any issues relating to the certification process, including but not limited to recognition of prior learning (RPL), assessment, moderation, and certification.
- Customer service: any issues relating to the service provided by Gateway Qualifications.
- Website, digital platforms, and online services: any issues relating to the functionality, usability, and accessibility of the Gateway Qualifications' website, MyQuartz portal, and other online services.
- Marketing and communication: any issues relating to the accuracy, relevance, and effectiveness of Gateway Qualifications' marketing, communication materials, webinars, and events.
- Policies and procedures: any issues relating to the clarity, fairness, and effectiveness of Gateway Qualifications' policies and procedures.

This policy does not cover:

- assessment decisions
- decisions regarding reasonable adjustments or special considerations
- decisions relating to any action to be taken against a learner or a centre following an investigation into malpractice or maladministration
- where evidence suggests Gateway Qualifications did not apply policies and procedures consistently with the results of assessment, an application of a sanction, or

- complaints about how your personal data is processed by Gateway Qualifications (or the third parties we work with) or how your complaint has been handled

Our [Appeals Policy](#), or [Access to HE Learner Appeals Policy](#), covers assessment decisions. These policies are found on the [Gateway Qualifications' website](#). Should an appeal be submitted under this Feedback and Complaints Policy, we will respond to inform the relevant party that the issue is being considered following our Appeals Policy or Access to HE Learner Appeals Policy.

If a complaint is made which relates to or is connected with the substance or management of an appeal and either the appeal is ongoing, or the content of the complaint is substantially similar to that of an appeal (as determined by Gateway Qualifications), then the appeal will take precedence in terms of hearing and timing. The two processes will not run alongside each other, and the appeal will be given priority.

If your complaint relates to suspected malpractice or maladministration, for example, concerning how an assessment or examination was conducted, you should send your concern to us without delay following the guidance set out in our [Malpractice and Maladministration Policy](#). Should a complaint be submitted that alleges malpractice or maladministration, we will respond to inform the party that the issue will be considered following our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

If your complaint relates to how your personal data is processed by Gateway Qualifications (or the third parties we work with) or how your complaint has been handled, you have the right to complain directly to the supervisory authority and Gateway Qualifications' data protection representative, details of which are in our [Privacy Notice](#).

Gateway Qualifications will not accept complaints or repeated contact on issues that have been investigated through Gateway Qualifications' complaints procedure unless presented with new information or evidence. Whilst we will treat every complaint fairly, we will not engage with frivolous or vexatious complaints. In circumstances where Gateway Qualifications considers your complaint to be frivolous, vexatious or about issues already investigated by Gateway Qualifications, you will be notified in writing and any further contact from you regarding the same issues will not be acknowledged.

Audience

This policy applies to all customers of Gateway Qualifications' including centres, learners, providers, apprentices, stakeholders and all interested parties who encounter a direct or indirect service from Gateway Qualifications.

Definitions

Word/Acronym	Definition
Feedback	Compliments or suggestions to help improve our products and services.
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction about our products or services.
Centre(s)	Recognised centres - those who have entered into a contract with Gateway Qualifications to deliver our products and services.

Word/Acronym	Definition
Provider(s)	For EPA Gateway Qualifications will enter into a contract with an Apprenticeship Training Provider to deliver assessment services to apprentices. The provider may also be a recognised centre.
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning

Details

Centres

We expect centre staff involved in the management, assessment, and quality assurance of our regulated qualifications, units, or courses, as well as their learners, to be aware of this policy. Similarly, for end-point assessment, we expect providers, employers and apprentices to be aware of this policy.

Gateway Qualifications requires centres and providers to operate their own complaints and appeals procedures for their learners and apprentices. Centres must have an internal complaints policy and procedure and a separate appeals policy and process in place to deal with complaints from learners and apprentices or others about the services provided by your centre.

Gateway Qualifications

Gateway Qualifications is responsible for ensuring that:

- all centres manage and maintain a centre complaints policy and process
- all complaints are treated seriously, sensitively and with due consideration to confidentiality and data protection
- all complaints are dealt with fairly and consistently
- all complainants will be kept informed of the handling and result of the complaint investigation
- all complaints will be recorded, reviewed and analysed as part of Gateway Qualifications' commitment to continuous improvement.

Where a regulator or others notify us of failures that have been discovered in the assessment process of another awarding organisation(s), we will review whether or not a similar failure could affect our own assessment processes and arrangements, consider whether any remedial action is necessary in relation to assessments that have been undertaken, and consider appropriate amendments to those processes for the future.

Process

Gateway Qualifications will treat all feedback and complaints confidentially and impartially, and they will handle them following the Gateway Qualifications' Data Protection Policy. Personal data will be collected, used, and retained in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Gateway Qualifications will treat learners, apprentices, centres, and any other interested parties respectfully throughout the complaint process, thoroughly reviewing and investigating all feedback and complaints received. Where necessary, actions will be taken to resolve the issue.

Providing feedback

You can provide feedback through various channels such as email, phone, feedback surveys, or in person. We may contact you regarding your feedback to gain additional information. We will regularly review feedback trends, using the information to improve our products and services.

Submitting a complaint

Complaints can be raised with Gateway Qualifications in writing, via email, phone, or in person. You should provide as much detail as possible about the issue, including any relevant dates, times, and names of any colleagues involved. Any supporting documentation, such as emails or letters and your desired resolution, should be attached to the complaint.

If you wish to remain anonymous, please inform us that you do not wish us to disclose your identity. While we are prepared to investigate issues reported to us anonymously, we shall always attempt to verify the grounds of the complaint through a separate investigation before taking up the matter with those to whom the complaint relates. In such cases, we will do our best to maintain confidentiality; however, it may not be possible to anonymise individuals entirely during the course of the investigation.

NB: If you are a learner with a complaint relating to dissatisfaction with a Centre, the centre's complaints and appeals process must be exhausted before bringing the complaint to Gateway Qualifications. If you have not exhausted your centre's complaints process, we will clarify this requirement with you and redirect you to your centre. If your centre resolves the complaint, and you still have concerns you would like to raise, you can submit a complaint to Gateway Qualifications. Any supporting documentation, such as emails and/or letters, should be attached to the complaint.

Investigation of the complaint

We assess each case on its own merits and try to resolve the complaint effectively and as quickly as possible. When this is not possible, an appropriate staff member will conduct a full investigation of the complaint, and we will keep you updated along the way. Gateway Qualifications will ensure the investigation is carried out fairly, impartially and in a confidential way, and this will be monitored internally.

Reporting the outcome of the complaint investigation

We aim to complete our complaint investigation and respond within 20 working days. Where your complaint is more complex, involves anyone unavailable at the time, or relies on awaiting further information or evidence from you or a third party, we may extend this as necessary. We will always inform you of any changes to the timeframe for handling your complaint. We may also contact you within this period to seek further information or clarification (in some instances, we may recommend a meeting).

If we have informed you that your complaint is under investigation and explained what is happening with the investigation process, we will not accept repeated contact about the investigation.

At the end of the investigation, Gateway Qualifications will inform you and any other interested parties of our decision.

There will be two possible outcomes from a complaint and associated investigation, and the decision will be communicated in writing:

- Complaint upheld or partially upheld – full details and reasons for the decision will be provided, and details of the actions to be taken by Gateway Qualifications to prevent a similar issue or problem from arising in the future.
- Complaint not upheld – full details and reasons for the decision will be provided, alongside details of your right to request a review of the outcome.

Review of the complaint

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint, you can request a review within 10 working days of the date of the outcome communication. The request must be made in writing, stating the reasons why you disagree with the outcome, with supporting evidence that the outcome was based on inaccurate facts and that we did not consider all relevant information or misunderstood parts of your complaint.

A senior staff member will undertake the review to ensure that the correct procedure was followed and that the outcome was based on facts with all relevant and factual information considered.

We will aim to complete the review within 30 working days after your request has been accepted, but we will let you know if it is likely to take longer. The outcome will be communicated in writing, and it is Gateway Qualifications' final response to the complaint.

Escalation to Regulators

If the Gateway Qualifications' complaints procedure has been exhausted and you are not satisfied with our final response, the complaints process of the relevant regulatory body may be followed:

Regulatory bodies

In England	Ofqual: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual/about/complaints-procedure QAA – Access to HE Diplomas: ahe@qaa.ac.uk
In Wales	Qualifications Wales: enquiries@qualificationswales.org

Monitoring

Gateway Qualifications will record all feedback and complaints received. We will use this information to identify trends or areas for improvement in our products and services. This will enable Gateway Qualifications to ensure the feedback and complaints process works effectively.

Gateway Qualifications will review this policy and its associated procedures annually as part of its self-evaluation arrangements, revising it as and when necessary, in response to customer, Learner learner or regulatory feedback or findings from internal and external monitoring arrangements, changes in internal practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or other external agencies, or where there may be changes in legislation.

Gateway Qualifications' Quality and Standards and Access to HE Committees are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the application of this policy. An annual summary is also submitted to the Board of Trustees for monitoring and ratification.

Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact:

Telephone: 01206 911211
 Email: enquiries@gatewayqualifications.org.uk
 Post: Gateway Qualifications, Gateway House, 6 Tollgate Business Park, COLCHESTER, CO3 8AB

Version: 7.0 June 2024
 Policy author: Commercial Director
 Board approval date: 10 July 2024
 Review Date: June 2025

Ofqual, General Conditions of Recognition
Condition D3: Reviewing approach
Condition D4: Responding to enquiries and complaints
Qualifications Wales Standard Conditions of Recognition
Condition D3: Reviewing approach
Condition D4: Responding to enquiries and complaints
QAA licensing criteria
Criteria 30: Operations