

## **Deer Management Qualification**

### **Complaint & Grievance Procedures**

#### **Introduction**

These procedures, which incorporate appeal processes, are designed to ensure a transparent, fair and consistent approach by DMQ in how such matters are dealt including their outcomes. DMQ view this process as a positive approach to maintaining and improving its quality of service thereby achieving public confidence in the credibility of the qualification process and its awards.

Grievance and complaints may occur both internally within DMQ, within approved assessment centres and externally via candidates or other affected 3<sup>rd</sup> parties.

#### **Extent of procedures**

For the purposes of these procedures the word 'grievance' and 'complaint' are viewed as synonymous and therefore the word 'complaint' is used within the text to describe both. The procedure should be adhered to in dealing with any complaint in which concern is raised relating to the services provided or the credibility of the qualification process or awards attained in line with the OFQAL General Conditions of Recognition, 2016.

Occasionally candidates may wish to complain direct to DMQ in respect of the service provided by their respective assessment centre. It is stressed that, where appropriate, assessment centre internal complaint procedures should be exhausted prior to a complaint being referred to DMQ for further action or investigation. Such complaints therefore in the first instance will be referred to the relevant Centre. However, in the more serious of cases where there is potential for reputational damage to the credibility of the qualifications a decision may be taken for the matter to be dealt with by DMQ from the outset therefore early referral and liaison with DMQ should take place.

Irrespective of who deals with a complaint, notification should be made on receipt to DMQ Admin Centre who will maintain a register, recording brief details of the complaint and person dealing with it.

Where a period of 12 months has elapsed between the matter giving rise to the complaint and the complaint being made known no further action will normally be taken and a dispensation from the requirement to investigate the matter will be made.

The complainant will be informed that unless there is good reason for the delay in reporting the matter the complaint will not be accepted; the onus being on the complainant to provide the reasons. In cases where a complainant provides such reasons a decision by the DMQ Chairman will be made as to whether the complaint is accepted.

## **Internal complaints**

### **Stage 1.**

Where complaints arise concerning DMQ from Assessment Centres, e.g.

- the approval status of the centre to deliver training and qualifications
- the performance of Assessors or Internal Verifiers
- matters emanating from external verification reports

the Centre should write to DMQ (for the attention of the relevant External Verifier) within 5 days, providing details of the complaint. The I.V. should endeavour to resolve the matter within 10 days to the mutual satisfaction of the parties involved. Where such complaints are received directly by the E.V. in the first instance the E.V. will notify the centre forthwith and seek to resolve the matter within 10 days.

### **Stage 2**

Where such cases are not resolved the matter will be referred to the Chair of the QADG who will take whatever steps deem appropriate in the circumstances to resolve the matter within 15 days, whether that be based on written reports, meetings with those concerned or referral to the Group as a whole. The subsequent decision as to outcome will be communicated to the complainant and/or Centre and that decision will be final.

### **Stage 3 – Appeal**

Appeals against such decisions should be submitted in writing to the Chair of DMQ within 7 days who will determine the outcome of the appeal within 21 days following consultation with the Board of Directors if appropriate.

## **External complaints**

Where complaints arise concerning DMQ, Assessment Centres or affected 3<sup>rd</sup> parties, e.g.

- disputes about the outcome of assessment
- the conduct of an Assessor responsible for their assessment
- the conduct of an approved witness
- any other matters relating to their treatment

the following steps should be taken.

## Stage 1

If DMQ are not the initial recipient they should be notified for the purposes of maintaining a record. The Centre should, in the first instance, invoke their complaints procedure which will normally involve the Centre or individual receiving the complaint endeavouring to resolve the complaint informally with the complainant.

## Stage 2

If early resolution of the complaint is not possible or appropriate the Centre should follow their procedures for dealing with the matter. This should involve referral to the Senior Internal Verifier to make contact with the complainant, investigate the matter and resolve to the satisfaction of all parties concerned within 10 days.

## Stage 3

If it has not been possible to resolve the complaint to the mutual satisfaction of those involved then referral in writing to the Chair of the QADG should be made. The chair will take whatever steps deem appropriate in the circumstances to resolve the matter within 15 days, whether that be based on written reports, meetings with those concerned or referral to the Group as a whole. The subsequent decision as to outcome will be communicated to the complainant and any other party subject to complaint. The decision will be final.

## Stage 4 – Appeal

Appeals against such decisions should be submitted in writing to the Chair of DMQ within 7 days who will determine the outcome of the appeal within 21 days following consultation with the Board of Directors if appropriate.

DMQ have adopted the guidance given within Section (I) of the OFQUAL General Conditions of Recognition, 2016.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

In cases of complaints referred to either the QADG or Board of Directors such members must declare any conflict of interest that may arise e.g. where they may have a representative role in respect of the establishment or Assessment Centre subject to the complaint. Such conflicts of interest should be recorded and the individual concerned will not be involved in any investigation, hearing, sanction or appeal process.

## **Sanctions**

In the majority of cases found to be substantiated advice will be an appropriate measure and may invoke recommendations relating to training of individuals or changes relating to assessment procedures. In more serious cases verbal or written warnings may be

appropriate with the ultimate sanction of removal of authority to act as witness, assessor or verifier.

In cases involving dishonesty in which the credibility of the qualification gained is subject to scrutiny, revocation of a certificate may be considered. Such cases will be considered and judged on the basis of their merits by the DMQ Board of Directors.

DMQ has adopted the sanctions for non-compliance by Approved Centres as laid down in The NVQ Code of Practice 2006 (Appendix 3)

### **Notification of outcome**

The final outcome of all complaints should be notified to DMQ Admin for recording purposes.