

ACPMA COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE & POLICY

How to complain

Complaints about the ACPMA

If you have a complaint about the quality of service you have received from us we welcome your feedback and see this as an opportunity to improve our service. This policy **does not** cover Examination Result enquiries; please refer to the **Enquiries and Appeals Procedure** which covers examination results.

Please contact us using the details below.

Contact us

Please read this document in full and then if you wish to discuss the situation in the first instance and informally please call the office on the number below and speak to either a qualifications Administrator or Qualifications Development Officer; however if you wish to make an official complaint and would like us to address the situation please write in either via email or postal services, this will aid us in being able to address the complaint fully and accurately.

The ACPMA can be contacted via telephone on, in writing to the above address or by e-mail to info@acpmaglobal.com.

Written communication will always receive an acknowledgement within 3 working days and we will aim to respond fully within 10 working days to all complaints received and where this is not practical we will tell you why and when you can expect a reply.

The office is available Monday to Thursday between the hours of 9.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m and Friday between the hours of 9.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. We will endeavour to answer your questions or requests for assistance immediately. Where we have to seek assistance from elsewhere, we will respond within 10 days.

However you choose to contact us, we will always aim to:

- ❖ Provide a clear, accurate and helpful response
- ❖ Be clear about what action you need to take and by what date, if applicable
- ❖ Be courteous and professional

We request that all correspondence, either verbally or written is factual and we have a zero tolerance with regards to aggressive behaviour. All aggressive behaviour will be reported and if via telephone the ACPMA will terminate the call.

Privacy and confidentiality

We will deal with your affairs on a strictly confidential basis. All mail will be sent to the address instructed by you.

What is a complaint?

We define a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about the way in which we have carried out, or failed to carry out, our work and which requires a response from us.

Types of complaints we can deal with

The types of complaints we would consider under this policy are about aspects of the service **we** have provided. This includes complaints about:

- ❖ Mistakes or poor service;
- ❖ Unreasonable delay or failure to take action;
- ❖ Unprofessional behaviour or conduct of staff;
- ❖ Bias or unfair treatment;
- ❖ Failure to follow our published policies or procedures without a reasonable explanation.

Types of complaints we cannot deal with

The following are items **not** covered via this policy:

- ❖ Made more than four weeks from the action complained about;
- ❖ About the content of our policies, unless maladministration or misconduct is alleged;
- ❖ Regarding sister divisions of the National Federation of Property Professionals (such as ARLA, NAEA, ICBA, NAVA, APIP, AIPP);
- ❖ About matters which have previously been fully investigated through this complaints procedure;
- ❖ About a similar issue that has already been identified and where we are already taking or planning action;
- ❖ About issues that are regarding examination content (please refer to the Enquiries and Appeals procedure for examination complaints), including but not exhaustive, MOL study materials, Pearson Vue test centres, any terms and conditions you have agreed to upon making payments for examinations or purchase of study materials. MOL and Pearson Vue have their own complaints procedures and these should be followed if the complaint is around a service or product they deliver.

Stage 1 Complaint – resolving complaints informally

Some concerns can be resolved informally and we hope to deal with most matters in this way. However, we recognise that some complaints will require a more formal approach.

We believe it's best to deal with things straight away. If you have a concern or a complaint, we encourage you to call us in the first instance and speak to either a Qualifications Administrator or Qualifications Development Officer for an informal discussion and they will aim to resolve the situation for you where practical and within their remit of authority.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, the matter may be resolved over the telephone or in writing. Where an issue is resolved in writing we will write to you confirming the outcome. If we cannot resolve your concerns informally you may then wish to write in a raise a formal Stage 2 Complaint.

Depending on the circumstances, we reserve the right to deal with your complaint as a formal complaint under Stage 2 of our complaints policy.

Stage 2 Complaint – making a formal complaint

Usually we will only consider a complaint within four weeks of the action complained about. It is far easier to find out what happened and put things right if a complaint is received close to the time the matter occurred. As time passes it becomes more difficult to investigate events fully and fairly. We may make exceptions for complaints made outside the four-week time limit when we are satisfied there are reasonable grounds for the delay.

How a Stage 2 complaint can be made

A complaint can be made in the following ways:

By posting the stage 2 form (page 8) directly to:

ACPMA

By emailing the Responsible Officer at info@acpmaglobal.com

Complaints sent to other divisions of the National Federation of Property Professionals regarding the ACPMA will be forwarded to the ACPMA for action under this complaints policy.

Complaints must be made in writing on the form located at Page 8 of this document, either posted or via email. It is helpful to have a complaint in writing so that we have a clear record of the complainant's views on what went wrong.

Recording Stage 2 complaints

We will log all stage 2 complaints we receive so that we can monitor the types of problems, the best way to sort them out and how long we are taking to deal with them. This also helps us to consider how we can improve our own service delivery.

We are required to record all stage 2 complaints made and these must be available for our regulators to review when we are audited. However, confidential individual complaint information will not be detailed.

We will handle your information in line with data protection legislation.

How we deal with a formal Stage 2 complaint

The Responsible Officer will normally review all stage 2 complaints. If your complaint is about a member of the ACPMA team, another Senior person may be asked to review the complaint, especially if there is a possible conflict of interest, this action is only taken under exceptional circumstances.

It is important you tell us about the issue quickly and in full and the form located on page **8** must be completed in full and submitted to ACPMA in order for a Stage 2 complaint to be investigated.

Upon receipt of the form and supporting evidence we will acknowledge receipt within 3 working days and will aim to provide our substantive response to your complaint within 10 working days. If a response will take longer than this, we will keep you informed of progress, the reasons for any delay and when we expect to reply in full. All correspondence will be issued in the same format the initial Stage 2 complaint was issued to us.

If your complaint does not fall within the scope of our complaints policy, we will write to you to explain why. If you disagree, you can request a review of this decision – please see Stage 3 of our complaints policy within this document.

If we can deal with your complaint, during our initial assessment we may contact you to gather additional information or to clarify any issues. We will then write to you setting out our understanding of the complaint, asking you to agree that the issues identified have been correctly summarised, or to provide further clarification. We may also comment on the outcome you hope for.

Were we consider a complaint to be unspecific, excessively long or complex, before we carry out our initial assessment of the complaint, we may ask you to provide a summary of the key aspects of your complaint.

The 10 working day timescale for the investigation will begin when the specific issues to be investigated have been agreed by both parties. If we do not hear from you within 5 working days of a request for clarification, the complaint will be closed.

So that we can focus on the issues you have raised we do not normally allow you to change or expand your complaint unless we are satisfied that the information was not available at the time you made your complaint and it is material to the outcome of our investigation.

Our response will include a full explanation, setting out the results from our investigation; it will clearly state whether your complaint has been upheld or not and, if necessary, what steps we will take to put matters right. If we are unable to uphold your complaint we will explain why. Please note that for confidential matters we may not be able to provide full information, for example if the matter concerns an individual. If so, we will explain this.

If we uphold your complaint, we will tell you what remedy we propose – in most cases an apology is normally appropriate. The remedy chosen needs to be proportionate and appropriate to the failure in service or maladministration.

A complaint that has been upheld or partially upheld may give rise to the following remedies:

- ❖ A full explanation of any poor service you have received
- ❖ An apology

-
- ❖ An explanation of how a matter has been or may be rectified
 - ❖ Recommendations to change or improve our processes or procedures.

Behaviour of complainants

We will treat every complaint seriously and fairly. We understand some issues may cause frustration and dissatisfaction, however, we still expect people to be courteous and respectful when dealing with our members of staff.

If a complainant becomes abusive when corresponding with or talking to us, or persistently and repeatedly contacts us with no new evidence or information to bring to the investigation, or continues to behave in an unreasonable way, we may class this behaviour as vexatious and we will cease all communication with the complainant.

Stage 3 Complaint – internal review

If you remain unhappy with our response to your complaint, you can request a review of your complaint within 5 working days of our decision letter/email.

You may request an internal review:

- ❖ When you have complained about an aspect of our service and you remain unhappy with the response in our decision communication.

Terms of review

We will carry out a review if:

- ❖ You make your request within 5 working days of the date of our decision communication; and
- ❖ You provide clear reasons for making your request and set out the areas of concern. Your reasons must relate to the way that we have or have not investigated the complaint and NOT the detail of the complaint itself.

In order for us to consider a review you must show that:

- ❖ We made our decision based on inaccurate information and if accurate this could change our decision; or
- ❖ We overlooked or misunderstood parts of your complaint or did not take relevant information into account which could change our decision; or
- ❖ You do not consider the decision or outcome is reasonable in view of the findings of the complaint.

We will not allow you to change your complaint or introduce new information. However, we may permit new information where we are satisfied that this was not available to you at the time you made your complaint and if the information could change the outcome of the investigation.

We will not consider a review if you:

- ❖ Merely restate your complaint; or
- ❖ Fail to give grounds for a review; or
- ❖ Request a review outside the specified timeframe.

We will tell you within two working days if your request meets the criteria for an internal review. The internal review will be carried out by a senior member of staff who has not been involved in making the original decision or conducting the investigation. We aim to complete the internal review within 20 working days after the request was received or we will let you know if it is likely to take longer.

The review will consider whether:

- ❖ The investigation was thorough and fair;
- ❖ All relevant facts were taken into account; and whether
- ❖ The conclusions and decision reached were reasonable and properly explained.

We will not normally investigate a complaint unless our review concludes the investigation was not conducted properly in which case the review may recommend that a new investigation of the complaint is carried out, or that the investigation is reopened to take account of specific issues identified in the review.

If our complaints policy changes between the date of the complaint was received and the date we finished the investigation, the conduct of the investigation will be reviewed against the policy that applied on the date we received your original complaint.

You will receive the outcome of our review in writing. The decision of the internal review is final and represents the end of our complaints handling process.

Improvements to our service

We welcome your comments and suggestions and use them to improve our services and procedures. We send out feedback sheets regularly to candidates, but if you have any suggestions for improvement, please send them to the Head of Qualifications at the ACPMA.

Website: www.acpmaglobal.com
 Email: info@acpmaglobal.com

Stage 2 Formal Complaint form (Confidential)

Candidate number (if applicable)	Q	Title	
Full Name			
Date of Birth			
Postal address			
Email address			
Telephone number			
Full details regarding the Stage 2 Complaint Include all details, dates, conversations, who you have spoken	<i>(please continue on a separate sheet if required)</i>		

with regarding this complaint. The more information you can supply will aid the investigation.	
Date of incident/ situation	
Date Stage 2 Complaint sent to ACPMA AB	
Documents attached If you have emails, written correspondence to support your complaint record them here but attach copies with this form	(list all supporting documentation you are submitting)

I confirm the above information is a true record and I request this Formal Stage 2 Complaint is investigated

Signature

Date

Office use only

Date received by ACPMA

Date Investigation closed

Investigation commencement date

Date report issued to named person

