

Internal Review Procedure

Purpose

This procedure supports Queensland Treasury's (Treasury) compliance and commitment to the customer complaints management system. The procedure outlines the responsibilities and processes for an internal review of a customer complaint to Treasury.

What is an internal review?

An internal review is an impartial review of a customer complaint outcome or management process by a Treasury employee who was not the original receiving/investigating officer. A complainant may request an internal review if they are dissatisfied with the way their customer complaint was handled by Treasury and/or they believe the outcome was unreasonable.

An internal review is only available after the original customer complaint process has been finalised and can only be requested once. It is not a reinvestigation of the original complaint but establishes if the customer complaint management process for the original complaint was appropriate and/or whether the outcome reached was reasonable.

Queensland Treasury Customer Complaints Management Framework is based on a 3-level model of complaint handling which consists of:

1. frontline complaint handling (early resolution)
2. internal review
3. external review



This procedure should be read in conjunction with the:

- Customer complaints management framework
- Customer complaints management policy
- Customer complaints management procedure

All of these documents are available on the Queensland [Treasury website](http://www.treasury.qld.gov.au/complaints) at www.treasury.qld.gov.au/complaints

An internal review does not apply to:

- Customer complaints managed outside Treasury through an external review (e.g. a complaint to the Queensland Ombudsman or Queensland Human Rights Commission).
- Complaints that are not customer complaints, as defined under the Customer complaints management policy.
- Customer complaints that have previously been internally reviewed under the Customer complaints management framework.
- The complainant seeking clarification or explanation about the original decision or process (in these cases, the complainant should be referred back to the original receiving/investigating officer).

How do I request an internal review?

You must make a request in writing (taking into account any known support needs) for an internal review within **20 business days** of receipt of the outcome of your original complaint.

- Your request must explain why an internal review is appropriate (i.e. why the original decision was unreasonable, or the complaint handling process was unfair or deficient) and what action the complainant would like taken to resolve the issue.
- You should respond to any requests for further information, or to confirm information provided by phone. If insufficient information is provided, the internal review request may be declined.

What happens once I submit my request for an internal review to Queensland Treasury?

Once your request for an internal review is received, Treasury will allocate your request to an internal review officer who was not involved in managing the original customer complaint. That officer will assess the complainant's request to ensure sufficient information has been provided to enable the internal review to be undertaken (for example: why the original decision was unreasonable or the complaint handling process was unfair or deficient).

The internal review officer will:

- Model appropriate and ethical behaviour at all times.
- Apply procedural fairness to complainants and persons the subject of the internal review.
- Consider human rights when undertaking the internal review.
- Seek all relevant documentation relating to the complaint, which was prepared through the initial resolution process.
- Contact the complainant if additional information is required, or the review issues need to be confirmed, or to provide information about the internal review process.
- Subject to the complexity of the request, the internal review officer must aim to resolve the internal review within 20 days of receiving the internal review request.
- The internal review officer should keep the complainant informed of any changes or emergent issues that will impact the resolution of the internal review, including a revised finalisation date if more time is required.

Outcome finalisation of internal review

Unless you have requested some other form of communication, the internal review officer must advise you in writing about the outcome of the internal review process.

This should include:

- a clear explanation of the final decision, which addresses each issue raised and provides reasons
- any recommendations or outcomes
- any external review mechanisms available to you
- The internal review officer must also inform the original complaints officer about the outcome of the internal review
- The internal review officer must keep appropriate records about the information provided to you and original complaints officer. This should be stored in the register and/or the department's records management system.

When will an internal review not be undertaken?

If you do not outline the grounds of review or provide insufficient information, the internal review decision maker may advise you that the internal review request will not be examined unless this information is provided.

Other circumstances where the internal review will not be undertaken are:

- If you do not cooperate
- If the internal review request is frivolous or vexatious
- If the request for an internal review includes any new customer complaint issue(s). The issue(s) can be lodged by you as a new customer complaint.

What happens if I am dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal review?

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal review process, you can seek an external review through:

- [Queensland Ombudsman](http://www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au) – the Queensland Ombudsman is an independent body who investigate complaints about the actions and decisions of Queensland agencies (www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au).
- [Queensland Human Rights Commission](http://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au) – the Queensland Human Rights Commission is an independent body who handles complaints under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* and the *Human Right Act 2019* (www.qhrc.qld.gov.au).

What is expected of me?

Queensland Treasury expects complainants to:

- Cooperate in a respectful manner and understand that the Queensland Treasury will not tolerate unreasonable conduct including abusive, aggressive or disrespectful behaviour
- Provide a clear description of the problem and the desired solution
- Provide all relevant information when the complaint is made
- Understand that some matters cannot be addressed through the complaints management framework.

Want more information?

For more information on Queensland Treasury's Customer Complaints Management Framework refer to [Treasury's website](http://treasury.qld.gov.au) or email treasury.complaints@treasury.qld.gov.au

Definitions

Term	Definition
Complainant	A person or organisation (or their representative) making a complaint.
Customer Complaint	Customer Complaint means a complaint about the service or action of a public sector entity, or its staff, by a person who is apparently directly affected by the service or action – section 264(4) <i>Public Sector Act 2022 (Qld)</i> .
Frontline Receiving Officer	A Frontline Receiving Officer is a staff member that receives and initially assesses a complaint.
Investigating Officer	The staff member with the appropriate authority and expertise in their role to examine, action and respond to a complaint. Any staff member can be an Investigating Officer. They can also be the Receiving Officer.
External review	A process conducted by an external review body (for example, Queensland Ombudsman or Queensland Human Rights Commission) to ensure departmental decision-making is fair, reasonable and proper.

Frivolous complaint	A frivolous complaint is one with no serious purpose or value, and does not justify the resources that would be required to action it.
Internal review	<p>A process conducted by appropriately trained Treasury staff on request from the complainant which examines if the complaint management process for the original customer complaint was appropriate and/or if the outcome reached was reasonable.</p> <p>An internal review is not a re-investigation of the original customer complaint. Treasury's Internal Review Procedure provides more information about the internal review process.</p>
Internal review officer	<p>An internal review officer is a staff member who conducts an internal review.</p> <p>The officer must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• independent from the original customer complaint; and• in a position equal to, or higher than, the original decision-maker and<ul style="list-style-type: none">– authorised to make internal review decisions, including recommendations, or– be nominated by someone with this authority. An internal review may involve more than one internal review officer.
Vexatious complaint	A vexatious complaint is without reasonable or sound basis in fact, has little chance of succeeding, and is instead designed to harass, annoy, or create a resource burden for the department.