

Annex 5. Complaints procedure

Complaints procedure regarding the review process, the behaviour and actions of panel members, the behaviour and actions of the project manager

In accordance with its mission and vision, VLUHR QA prioritizes high-quality operations. If a programme or institution is dissatisfied with the course of the process, with the panel members or with the project manager involved with the process, the programme or institution can file a formal complaint. To this end, the following complaints procedure has been developed. The aim of the procedure is to deal with complaints in a fair and independent manner, without discriminating against the plaintiff. If the dissatisfaction of the programme or institution relates to the formal outcome of the second feedback round of the review report, this complaints procedure does not apply. In that case, an appeal can be lodged following the 'Appeals Procedure'.

Definition of a complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction expressed by a programme or institution regarding:

- the course of the review process;
- the behaviour or actions of panel members;
- the behaviour or actions of project managers.

Expectations regarding the review process are described in the 'Manual or the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, January 2020'.

Expectations regarding the behaviour and actions of the panel members are described in the 'Code of ethics and rules of conduct for panel members', which is part of the formal agreement between VLUHR and panel members.

Expectations regarding the behaviour and actions of project managers are determined in the 'Code of ethics and rules of conduct for project managers' of VLUHR QA and in the 'Code of ethics of VLUHR QA'.

Submitting and registering a complaint

The complaint is submitted in writing by a programme or institution (the plaintiff) involved in a review process via kwaliiteitszorg@vluhr.be stating 'complaint' and is addressed to the QA board.

The complaint contains the following information:

- the name, address and telephone number of the plaintiff;
- a statement that the rector or general manager of the institution supports the complaint;
- the object of the complaint;
- a factual and documented description of the objections invoked.

A staff member of VLUHR QA who is not involved in the subject of the complaint acknowledges receipt of the complaint by VLUHR QA within two working days, submits the complaint to the chair of the QA board and informs those concerned by the subject of the complaint.

Subsequent complaints will not be considered:

- complaints against (the content of the) review report;
- complaints where the facts occurred more than six months before the complaint was submitted;
- complaints that are anonymous.

Handling of the complaint

The chair of the QA board examines the admissibility of the complaint and communicates his findings to the other members of the QA board.

If the board considers the complaint to be inadmissible, it will inform the plaintiff. If the board considers the complaint to be admissible, it examines its merits. To this end, the board may call the parties involved to an individual or joint meeting, the place and time of which it will determine. The board then makes its decision after a discussion.

Deadlines for handling

The parties concerned shall be informed of the decision. The basic deadline for handling a complaint is fifteen working days (from the date of acknowledgment or receipt). If more time is needed, the plaintiff will be notified of this.