

**Guidance**  
**for**  
**Programmes Seeking Accreditation**



**Post Qualifying Consortium  
for  
Social Work in Scotland  
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## **Section 1**

### **The PQ Framework – about the awards**

Continuing professional development for social workers is set within a UK wide framework of post qualifying education and training. The framework delivers three nationally recognised Awards in Social Work – the Post Qualifying Award - Part 1; the Post Qualifying Award (PQSW) and the Advanced Award (AASW) - built on two different levels of competence. The awards are open to all staff of the personal social services who hold a professional social work qualification such as the DipSW, CQSW, CSS or a recognised equivalent. This includes social workers in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors. The awards are also open to independent social workers and those intending to return to practice after a career break.

#### **1.1 The Framework**

The PQ framework was developed by the Central Council for Education & Training in Social Work [CCETSW] in consultation with the main government, employer, educational, professional and trade union interests and has four main aims:

- to recognise and validate the professional development of qualified social workers
- to ensure common minimum standards across a wide variety of social work education and training at this level, in different sectors and settings
- to provide structures for post qualifying education and training which are flexible and responsive to the changing needs of service delivery, to different career pathways, and to the requirements of regulatory bodies
- to promote education, training and qualifications that support high standards of service and care in the personal social services.

#### **1.2 How it works**

The framework is delivered across the UK by 20 post qualifying education and training consortia, each now approved by the Council of the appropriate country. The Post Qualifying Consortium for Social Work in Scotland –approved by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) - is responsible for delivery of the framework within Scotland. Each consortium is made up of local employing agencies and academic institutions working in collaboration. This enables social workers to

have access to the awards in the area in which they work, or if they are not currently in employment, the area where they live.

At the heart of the framework is a system of credit accumulation and transfer (CATS) linked to academic awards which allows candidates to work towards an award over time, and if necessary in different workplaces. It also means that new courses and programmes designed to meet changing service delivery and work patterns can be readily bought into the framework.

The framework concentrates on the assessment of learning outcomes, in other words, on competency based assessment linked to indicative learning outcomes to recognise a worker's professional competence as a result of learning. This means that all forms of learning - assessed courses, informal learning in the workplace, distance and open learning - can be used to provide the evidence of competence in particular areas. In addition, the system allows professional credits to be put towards academic awards. The Awards:



- PQ Part 1 comprises 40 professional credits assessed at the academic equivalent of the final year of an undergraduate degree [Level 9 SCQF]
- PQ Part 2 comprises the other five professional requirements of the PQSW and is completed by accumulating a minimum of 80 professional credits, assessed at the academic equivalent of the final year of an undergraduate degree [Level 9 SCQF]
- the AASW is comprised of 8 professional requirements and a minimum of 120 credits, assessed at the academic level equivalent to a masters degree [Level 11 SCQF]. Each programme will relate to an advanced award pathway – practice, management, education and training, research or a combination of them.

As Programme Providers you need to state explicitly the level of your programme. Details of the SCQF and guidance to the relevant levels is found in Appendix 5. Programme Providers may be academic institutions, social work agencies or partnerships of the two. In Scotland the PQ Consortium policy has been to consider for Accreditation programmes which have already been academically validated or are being considered for academic validation in a dual process. Agency based/in-service programmes have only come forward for PQ Accreditation after the agency has made partnership arrangements with a Higher Education provider and the programme has been or is being academically validated in this way.

### **1.3 The UK Framework**

The PQ Framework sets a UK standard and is delivered across the four countries by Consortia approved by the appropriate Care Council. The Framework concentrates on the assessment of a worker's professional development and competence in relation to general and core requirements. These are set out below.

## Requirements for the PQ and Advanced Awards in Social Work

<p><b>Requirements for the Post Qualifying Award in Social Work (PQSW)</b></p>  <p><b>Core Requirements</b> In meeting the general requirements all candidates must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) evaluate the effectiveness of their practice using a relevant knowledge base, including an understanding of legal and policy contexts and appropriate research;</li> <li>(b) demonstrate an explicit adherence to the values of social work and to the provision of ethically sound practice.</li> </ul> <p><b>General Requirements</b> All candidates must demonstrate:</p> <p><b>PART I</b></p> <p><b>PQ1</b> that they have improved and extended the level of competence acquired by the point of qualification.</p> <p><b>PART II</b></p> <p><b>PQ2</b> competence in working effectively in complex situations;</p> <p><b>PQ3</b> competence in exercising the powers and responsibilities of a professional social worker, including the appropriate use of discretion and the management of risk;</p> <p><b>PQ4</b> ability to make informed decisions;</p> <p><b>PQ5</b> competence in identifying and maintaining purposeful networks and collaborative arrangements;</p> <p><b>PQ6</b> competence in enabling others through management, supervision, consultation, practice teaching or direct contributions to education and training.</p>	<p><b>Requirements for the Advanced Award in Social Work (AASW)</b></p>  <p><b>Core Requirements</b> In meeting the general requirements all candidates must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) demonstrate analysis and critical reflection which informs and influences practice, policy and service provision;</li> <li>(b) provide evidence of a commitment to sustaining the values of social work in the light of continuing social and political change and be able to define and develop policies and practices accordingly.</li> </ul> <p><b>General Requirements</b> All candidates must:</p> <p><b>AA1</b> provide evidence of significant contribution to the development, delivery and evaluation of the service provided in a chosen area by demonstrating the ability to research, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate strategies for improvement or change;</p> <p><b>AA2</b> demonstrate critical appraisal of relevant theoretical models, policies and law, in their chosen area, including knowledge of local, national and UK perspectives;</p> <p><b>AA3</b> demonstrate skilled use of a wide repertoire of methods and be able to select and use the most effective approach to meeting consumer need for the different aspects of their work;</p> <p><b>AA4</b> demonstrate competence in enhancing the capabilities of others as a means of informing and improving practice or service delivery;</p> <p><b>AA5</b> demonstrate highly developed skills in strategic networking, negotiation and collaboration;</p> <p><b>AA6</b> demonstrate competence in responding to and managing change in their chosen area, including the ability to respond to unintended outcomes;</p> <p><b>AA7</b> demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the impact of relevant policy, practice and institutions within the European or international context in order to inform practice or service development;</p> <p><b>AA8</b> provide evidence of leadership in their chosen field, including the ability to work independently, and to be accountable, in fulfilling the responsibilities of their role.</p>
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A Programme may relate to the PQSW Part 1, whole PQSW or the whole Advanced Award or to stated parts of them.

Your submitted material will explain the rationale for the parts of a particular award to which your programme relates and for which professional credits will be claimed by those who successfully complete it.

#### **1.4 The PQ Consortium and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)**

The SSSC has delegated responsibility for the PQ Framework in Scotland to the PQ Consortium. The SSSC is also the major source of funding for the PQ Consortium and monitors all aspects of its functioning. Thus SSSC, as the parent body of the PQ Consortium sets out policy and process in key areas as part of the approval and quality assurance of its activities. These are to be found in the Appendices of this document

Anti-Racism and Anti-Discriminatory Practice	App 6
Appeals Procedures	App 7
Complaints Procedures	App 8

## **Section 2**

### **Information to be provided in the submission**

This is often most clearly presented in the form of the Handbook you must produce for programme candidates. You may already have other documents which you can also include eg Equal Opportunities Policy, Assessment Regulations. Such documents could be included as appendices provided their relevance and location is explained. A summary is provided below under headings. Further detail related to each will be gathered as relevant through the consultation provided by the PQ Consortium Manager and the resources provided by the PQ Consortium Office.

#### **2.1 Why are you offering the programme, who will be the candidates, and what are the collaborative arrangements?**

Any programmes submitted for accreditation will have been developed in response to the needs of candidates, employers, professional bodies and academic institutions and will usually involve collaboration between at least one social work employer and one academic institution. An outline of the collaboration and negotiation which has led to the submission will set it in context and would include evidence of need or potential demand provided from employers, institutions or candidates.

The PQ framework uses competency based assessment linked to indicative learning outcomes and requires candidates to demonstrate the application of their learning to practice and their ability to learn from their practice. Thus, it is desirable, although not essential, for the management structure of your programme to demonstrate appropriate co-operation between social work employers and academic institutions. Within your submission you will therefore need to outline your collaborative arrangements for:

- a) The management of the programme. What are the institutional arrangements for sharing/devolving the establishment and quality control of the programme? Will it have a management or advisory group made up of representatives of each element of the partnership – academic institution and social work employer(s).

- b) The selection of candidates – how is publicity about the programme dispersed; when candidates come forward is there pre-selection within the sponsoring agency according to which criteria; what is the programme’s selection process and criteria; who is involved in screening applicants and how.
- c) Teaching and training inputs – who is involved, how are they selected for this role and do these people exert control over the planning, development and review of the programme – e.g. Membership of team delivering the programme; or membership of course committee.
- d) The assessment of candidates in relation to the PQ/AA Requirements to be claimed through this programme – who is involved, how and by whom are they recruited; who would be appropriate and what are the expectations of them; what experience do they need to have of assessing practice competence; what status does their judgement have vis-à-vis purely academically assessed components of the programme.

## **2.2 Anti-oppressive and equal opportunities policies**

All programmes submitted to the PQ Consortium must indicate the elements which will lead to further development of the capabilities of qualified social workers in relation to policies and practices which are anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory. Thus within the submitted documentation programmes are expected to indicate the context of and opportunities for such development, related to Core Requirement b) of both the PQSW award and the Advanced Award.

It is essential that the programme also models good practice in this area and the submission will give details about how you apply the principles of equality of opportunity to:

- a) the provision of information about the programme to relevant organisations and prospective candidates
- b) the selection of candidates
- c) the secondment and other funding of candidates
- d) systems for student support including library access, IT resources and tutor support in relation to educational needs
- e) internal quality assurance procedures.



And

The adherence to the principles of equality of opportunity in:

- a) teaching methods and processes
- b) programme content, which should include teaching on equal opportunity practice and the implications of that practice for service delivery and development
- c) the content of reading lists which should include reference to a range of equal opportunity and anti-discriminatory issues
- d) assessment procedures, which ensure assessment of knowledge of equal opportunity principles and concomitant anti-discriminatory practice skills.

### **2.3 Location of Programme at either Post-Qualifying or Advanced level**

Section 1 of this Handbook explains how the PQ Framework explicitly links the attainment of each of the two awards to academic criteria of level. Programme providers will therefore detail within the submission how the programme is formulated to take account of level. It should state explicitly at which level a programme is being offered and provide a clear rationale to justify that level. [SCQF Tables – Appendix 5] Programmes being submitted for Advanced Award credits also need to detail to which pathways the programme relates:

- practice
- management
- education and training
- research
- combination ( which and how much of the programme relates to each element of the combination).

### **2.4 Entry Requirements**

The submission will clarify the specific entry requirements to be met by candidates, will ensure these requirements are appropriate to the level of programme, and that prospective candidates have the necessary qualifications, practice experience and competence to benefit from the programme. They will also clarify that to be eligible for the professional credits which lead to the PQ and Advanced Awards candidates must hold a CQSW, CSS, DipSW or other equivalent qualification recognised by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and be registered with the PQ Consortium as candidates.

As a programme provider you must also detail how you will ensure that candidates for PQ/Advanced Awards have:

- a) previous qualifications and/or practice experience of a level, and of a length and depth appropriate to the nature of the programme
- b) access to relevant practice opportunities and supervision during the programme.

The PQ Consortium recognises that programmes may attract candidates from a range of disciplines and that such programmes may be highly relevant to the context in which social workers practice, but only those with the social work qualifications noted above will be eligible for professional credits leading to the PQSW or the Advanced Award in Social Work, in addition to academic credits for which the programme has also been validated.

## **2.5 Programme details and academic volume**

The PQ Consortium requires you to provide details on the following when submitting your programme:

- a) the total time required to complete the programme on a full or part-time basis and how this time is distributed over the duration of the programme – blocks, day release etc
- b) the allocation of time for practice-based learning, supervision/work-based mentoring, research, private study etc
- c) the availability of APEL or distance learning facilities.

As explained in Section 1 the PQ Framework requires the practice and academic levels of programmes to be explicitly linked to definitions of 'academic level' current within higher education within the UK. Your submitted documentation will also state your claims for credit utilising the concept of 'academic volume' and 'notional student effort' derived from the higher education framework.

As accredited programmes will enable candidates to gain professional as well as academic credits, a key focus of the accreditation process will be on how your programme develops practice competence in an integrated way which connects learning outcomes, including knowledge based ones to the PQ or AA Requirements being claimed. It is essential that direct observation evidence in relation to the PQ/AA requirements is an assessment requirement of the programme and

that a range of supporting evidence from practice contributes to assessment.

In relation to programmes being submitted for the full PQSW or AASW - 120 credits at the specified level – the PQ Consortium’s Accreditation Panel will focus on how your submitted programme demonstrates coherence, integration and progression.

## **2.6 Retrospective accreditation**

Retrospective accreditation may be granted, at the conclusion of the accreditation process, for candidates who have begun the programme before credit rating within the PQ/AA Framework was sought. It may be claimed as long as the programme was substantially the same as the submitted programme. Specifically, the assessment of candidates in relation to the PQ/AA requirements must have been of an equivalent standard and included direct observation of practice.

## **2.7 Assessment**

The submission will also detail how the learning outcomes are to be assessed, demonstrating the use of valid and reliable methods of assessment. Many of the learning outcomes when linked to the Practice Requirements of the PQ/AA Framework will require supporting evidence from the workplace to demonstrate their attainment. Information about how such evidence, which must include direct observation evidence, will be obtained and assessed will be detailed within your submission. The guidance provided to candidates about confidentiality issues and anonymisation of supporting evidence would be an essential part of the submission.

Evidence of learning outcomes may be provided from a range of sources:

- a) written or oral examination
- b) dissertation
- c) research reports
- d) project reports
- e) critical and reflective commentaries by candidates about their practice
- f) evidence of practice competence; including practice log, work products and direct observation of practice

- g) references, testimonials and reports from service users, colleagues, supervisors/managers
- h) other methods including the use of video, audio tape.

In considering accreditation within the PQ/AA Framework the PQ Consortium will seek detailed information in relation to their requirements for direct observation of practice as an essential source of evidence within the assessment structures and processes of your programme. Similarly the involvement of service users and carers within the learning process will be a focus of attention and feedback from such sources is strongly encouraged wherever possible. Programmes should:

- a) have clearly delineated procedures for assessing the currency, validity, authenticity and sufficiency of evidence in relation to the PQ/AA Requirements for which credit will be claimed through the programme
- b) detail the assessment procedures to be followed, including the involvement of partner organisations and of an external examiner/assessor/moderator
- c) have in place an appropriate appeals procedure for candidates.

## **2.8 Information to candidates and others**

As indicated in the Introduction to this Section, the Handbook you produce for programme candidates will contain much of the information required for this accreditation process. Through this and other publicity material you would also show how you inform candidates and their employers of the arrangements for registering with the PQ Consortium for the PQSW or the AASW.

## **2.9 Quality assurance arrangements**

The submitted information will be considered by the PQ Consortium in terms of quality assurance of how the programme meets the SSSC Requirements for PQSW/AASW, and in terms of your internal quality assurance processes including:

- a) arrangements for external moderation (including 'awareness' and experience of the PQSW/AASW frameworks of potential external assessors)
- b) arrangements for monitoring and review

- c) arrangements for feedback on the operation of the programme from candidates, programme staff, partnership organisations, service users and carers, and external assessors/examiners/moderators
- d) complaints and appeals procedures.

### **2.10 Information to support you in the submission process**

In some instances the specific information you need to submit will be determined by which of the awards your programme relates to. Therefore, the consultation and resources available through the PQ Consortium Manager will provide the appropriate detail. Source information from the UK PQ Handbook may be obtained from the PQ Consortium office, relating to:

PQSW Part 1

PQSW Part 6

AASW & Pathways to AASW

## **Section 3**

### **How to apply for accreditation of your programme**

The Quality Assurance Sub-Committee has delegated responsibility/authority for all assessment and accreditation activities of the PQ Consortium, which includes the development of relevant procedures; guidance; the Pool of Assessors; standardisation; and assessment and accreditation decisions.

#### **3.1 The Pool of Assessors**

The Pool of Assessors who assess portfolios and function as members of Assessment and/or Programme Accreditation Panels, was established early in 2002. Individuals apply to become members of the Pool with the approval of their employer and by completing the pro-forma which seeks detailed information about qualifications and experience relevant to the primary tasks of assessors/members of accreditation panels. Once approved/accepted by the sub-committee individuals will be invited to a briefing/standardisation meeting, and will then be allocated to Assessment/Accreditation Panels as required.

#### **3.2 Programme Accreditation Panels and the process of credit rating of taught programmes**

The authority to approve and credit-rate programmes is delegated by the PQ Consortium's Management Committee to the Quality Assurance Sub-committee. A Panel is set up when the full documentation on the programme is received by the Consortium office by the quarterly submission date. It is chaired by a member of the Quality Assurance Sub-committee and will include two members drawn from the Pool of Assessors along with the Consortium Manager. The Panel will comprise at least one member from an academic institution and one from a social work agency, normally with a mix of genders, and with due attention to geographical spread and to excluding any member of the pool who has an 'interest' in the programme being considered. The process for approval and accreditation of programmes through the PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland is outlined below and a flow chart of the process is attached. Detailed guidance on the preparation of programmes for accreditation will be provided by the PQ Consortium Manager.

When the full documentation on the programme has been received and a Panel set up, that documentation is considered by the Panel members, and their views collated by the Chair. Feedback is then given to the Programme Provider either at a meeting, by telephone or email and confirmed in writing. The Programme Provider is invited to suggest a date by which any amendments or additional material will be available. A date is then made for the Panel to meet with the Programme Provider.

At this meeting the members may decide to recommend to the Quality Assurance Sub-committee that:

- the Programme and its credit rating be approved
- the Programme is not approved
- identified requirements need to be met before approval and credit rating can be given
- the Programme be approved with recommendations for amendments or additions to be made and reported in the first Annual Monitoring Review.

The Panel reports its recommendations to the Quality Assurance Sub-committee for confirmation and recording of the decision. Detailed feedback is prepared and sent to the Programme Providers. The conduct of these accreditation processes is subject to Quality Assurance through the Consortium's External Assessors appointed by the SSSC.

Once the Programme has been approved and credit-rated, it will be subject to the PQ Consortium's quality assurance and review processes on an annual basis. In addition, those who successfully complete the programme and are registered with the PQ Consortium will be notified by the programme, confirmed by the Quality Assurance Sub-committee for professional credit and processed through Central Registry when PQ 1 or a full Post Qualifying or Advanced Award has been achieved.

This process is set out in Appendix 1 & 2  
The Feedback Pro-forma is Appendix 3

### **3.3 Directory of Approved Programmes in Scotland**

This is currently a separate document published by the Scottish Social Services Council and is available from them or from the PQ Consortium Office. All accredited programmes are detailed within it.

### **3.4 Monitoring and review of Accredited Programmes**

When the Panel recommends to the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee that a programme should be approved and credit-rated the Consortium will formally advise the programme provider that continued accreditation within the PQ Framework will be subject to regular monitoring and review. This will require the programme provider to complete our Monitoring and Review form on an annual basis. [Appendix 4]

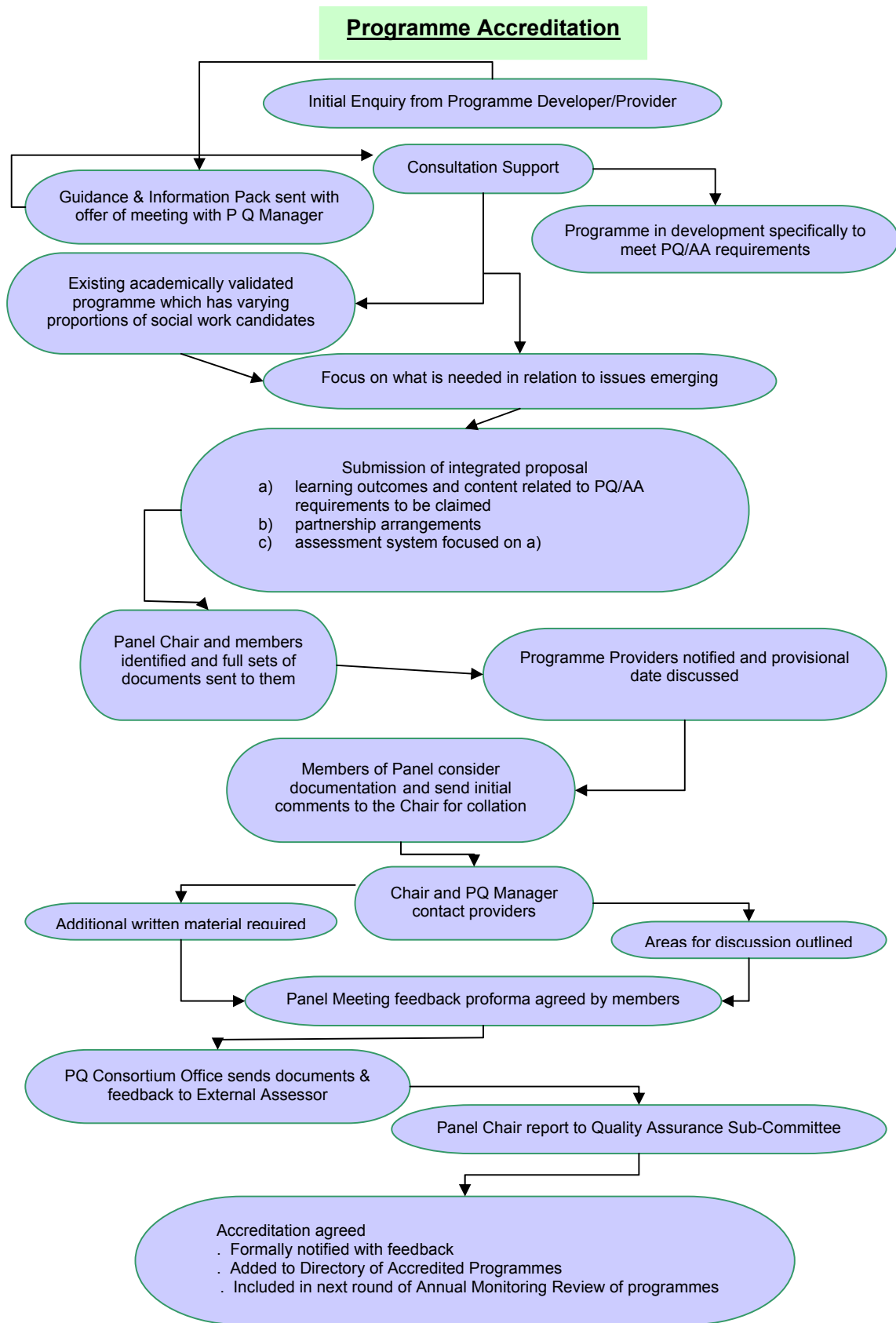
Programme providers will also be informed that the Consortium must be advised of all subsequent changes to the accredited programme, particularly in relation to changes in learning outcomes, in connections to the PQ/AA Requirements, or to approaches to and tools used in assessment. These must be notified in the Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) and further discussion/review of accreditation may follow.

The Quality Assurance Sub Committee will be the Consortium's main mechanism for ensuring that all programme providers meet the requirements as set out in the PQ Handbook from CCETSW. That document will be the foundation for the PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland's quality assurance process.

### **3.5 Monitoring and review of candidates**

Candidates who have successfully completed awards may be requested to fill out a questionnaire based on their experiences of being a candidate thus allowing us to monitor candidates' experiences of completing PQ Awards.





## **Quality Assurance Sub-Committee**

The agreed process for Programme Accreditation Panels:

1. The PQ Consortium Office scrutinises the submission to check key components are present.
2. Panel Chairs are agreed at the QA Sub-committee following the submission date and the PQ Consortium Office then allocates readers and agrees dates and venues to meet; giving consideration to issues of balance in terms of geography, gender, experience, and academic/practitioner issues.
3. The Programme providers are consulted by the PQ Consortium Office about a provisional date for the Panel Meeting and an appropriate venue for that. They are also notified of the Panel Chair and his/her contact details.
4. Information and submission documents are sent to Chair and Panel members at least one month ahead of Panel Date. Members will agree whether they need a preliminary meeting or whether initial comments may be gathered through email and phone communication.
5. The Panel Chair will collate these and through the PQ Consortium Office will communicate with the programme providers as to additional written material which may be required, and areas for discussion when the programme providers and Panel meet.
6. The meeting – usually a brief time allocated for Panel to meet and formulate the areas for discussion prior to the arrival of the Programme Providers. The PQ Consortium Manager will attend with two roles – to ensure that the UK/SSSC requirements are being met at an appropriate and consistent standard; to collate with the Chair the formalised feedback to the providers which explains the decisions and may form the base-line for the first Annual Monitoring Review of the Accredited Programme.
7. The PQ Consortium Office sends the submission documents and the feedback form to the External Assessor.
8. The Panel Chair reports to the Quality Assurance Sub-committee on the decision, and External Assessor comments are discussed.

When decision is confirmed it is recorded and notified formally to the Programme Providers.

## **Post Qualifying Consortium for Social Work in Scotland**

### **Quality Assurance sub-committee**

Feedback to Programmes submitting for Accreditation

Programme Name	
Institution/Partnership	
Correspondent's Name	
Panel Date	
Panel Chair	
Level and credit claimed	
Recommendation	
Level and Credit awarded	

General comment on structure and content of documents submitted

Collaboration between Programme Provider and other agencies and institutions

Equal Opportunities Policies

Location of Programme at PQ or Advanced Level

Relevance of content to Requirements for PQ/AA

Entry Requirements

Programme details and academic volume

Retrospective accreditation

Assessment (including direct observation elements)

Information to candidates and others

Quality Assurance Arrangements

Other specific advice for resubmission or Annual Monitoring

## The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

SCQF levels	SQA National Units, courses and group awards	Higher Education (HE) qualifications	SVQs	SCQF levels
12		<b>Doctorate</b>		12
11		<b>Masters</b>	<b>SVQ 5</b>	11
10		<b>Honours degree</b>		10
9		<b>Ordinary degree</b>		9
8		<b>HND Diploma of HE</b>	<b>SVQ 4</b>	8
7	<b>Advanced Higher</b>	<b>HNC Certificate of HE</b>		7
6	<b>Higher</b>		<b>SVQ 3</b>	6
5	<b>Intermediate 2/ Credit S Grade</b>		<b>SVQ 2</b>	5
4	<b>Intermediate 1/ General S Grade</b>		<b>SVQ 1</b>	4
3	<b>Access 3/ Foundation S Grade</b>			3
2	<b>Access 2</b>			2
1	<b>Access 1</b>			1

The SCQF has been created by bringing together all Scottish mainstream qualifications into a single unified framework - higher education qualifications; HNCs and HNDs; SQA National Qualifications; and SVQs. There are 12 levels ranging from Access 1 (National Qualification) at SCQF level 1 to Doctorate at SCQF level 12. Each qualification - unit, group of units or larger group award – has also been allocated a number of SCQF credits, each credit representing 10 notional hours of required learning. Doctorates based on a thesis are an exception. The SCQF also offers a means to allocate levels and credit values to other assessed and quality assured learning.

The positioning of SVQs in the table gives a broad indication of their place in the framework. A major project is underway to refine the position of SVQs in the framework within a UK context.



## SCQF Level 9 - (SHE level 3, Ordinary degrees)

NB: The descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise nor comprehensive statements and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

Knowledge and Understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic Cognitive Skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ a broad and integrated knowledge and understanding of the scope, main areas and boundaries of a subject/discipline</li> <li>◦ a critical understanding of a selection of the principal theories, principles, concepts and terminology</li> <li>◦ knowledge that is detailed in some areas and/or knowledge of one or more specialisms that are informed by forefront developments</li> </ul>	<p>Use a selection of the principal skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline</p> <p>Use a few skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are specialised or advanced</p> <p>Practice routines methods of enquiry and/or research</p> <p>Practice in a range of professional level contexts which include a degree of unpredictability</p>	<p>Undertake critical analysis, evaluation and/or synthesis of ideas, concepts, information and issues</p> <p>Identify and analyse routine professional problems and issues</p> <p>Draw on a range of sources in making judgements</p>	<p>Use a range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills in support of established practices in a subject/discipline, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ make formal and informal presentations on standard/mainstream topics in the subject/discipline to a range of audiences</li> <li>◦ use a range of IT applications to support and enhance work</li> </ul> <p>interpret, use and evaluate numerical and graphical data to achieve goals/targets</p>	<p>Exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level</p> <p>Take some responsibility for the work of others and for a range of resources</p> <p>Practice in ways which take account of own and others' roles and responsibilities</p> <p>Work under guidance with qualified practitioners</p> <p>Deal with ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices, seeking guidance where appropriate</p>

### SCQF Level 10 - (SHE level 4, Honours degrees)

NB: The descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise nor comprehensive statements and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

Knowledge and Understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic Cognitive Skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ knowledge that covers and integrates most of the principal areas, features, boundaries, terminology and conventions of a subject/discipline</li> <li>◦ a critical understanding of the principal theories, concepts and principles</li> <li>◦ detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialisms some of which is informed by or at the forefront of a subject/discipline</li> <li>◦ knowledge and understanding of the ways in which the subject/discipline is developed, including a range of established techniques of enquiry or research methodologies</li> </ul>	<p>Use a range of the principal skills, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline</p> <p>Use a few skills, practices and/or materials which are specialised, advanced, or at the forefront of a subject/discipline</p> <p>Execute a defined project of research, development or investigation and identify and implement relevant outcomes</p> <p>Practice in a range of professional level contexts which include a degree or unpredictability and/or specialism</p>	<p>Critically identify, define, conceptualise, and analyse complex/professional level problems and issues</p> <p>Offer professional level insights, interpretations and solutions to problems and issues</p> <p>Critically review and consolidate knowledge, skills and practices and thinking in a subject/discipline</p> <p>Demonstrate some originality and creativity in dealing with professional level issues</p> <p>Make judgements where data/information is limited or comes from a range of sources</p>	<p>Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills in support of established practices in a subject/discipline, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ make formal presentations about specialised topics to informed audiences</li> <li>◦ communicate with professional level peers, senior colleagues and specialists</li> <li>◦ use a range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify refinements/improvements to software to increase effectiveness</li> <li>◦ interpret, use and evaluate a wide range of numerical and graphical data to set and achieve goals/targets</li> </ul>	<p>Exercise autonomy and initiative in professional/ equivalent activities</p> <p>Take significant responsibility for the work of others and for a range of resources</p> <p>Practice in ways which show a clear awareness of own and others' roles and responsibilities</p> <p>Work effectively under guidance in a peer relationship with qualified practitioners</p> <p>Work with others to bring about change, development and/or new thinking</p> <p>Deal with complex ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices</p> <p>Recognise the limits of these codes and seek guidance where appropriate</p>

### SCQF Level 11 - (SHE level 5, PG 1, PG Dip, PG Cert, MA, MSc, SVQ 5)

NB: The descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise nor comprehensive statements and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

Knowledge and Understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic Cognitive Skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ knowledge that covers and integrates most, if not all, of the main areas of a subject/discipline – including their features, boundaries, terminology and conventions</li> <li>◦ a critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts</li> <li>◦ a critical understanding of a range of specialised theories, principals and concepts</li> <li>◦ extensive, detailed and critical knowledge and understanding in one or more specialisms, much of which is at or informed by developments at the forefront</li> <li>◦ critical awareness of current issues in a subject/discipline and one or more specialisms</li> </ul>	<p>Use a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, practices and/or materials which are associated with a subject/discipline</p> <p>Use a range of specialised skills, techniques, practices and/or materials which are at the forefront or informed by forefront developments</p> <p>Apply a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry</p> <p>Plan and execute a significant project of research, investigation or development</p> <p>Demonstrate originality or creativity in the application of knowledge, understanding and/or practices</p> <p>Practise in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional level contexts</p>	<p>Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis to issues which are at the forefront or informed by developments at the forefront of a subject/discipline</p> <p>Identify, conceptualise and define new and abstract problems and issues</p> <p>Develop original and creative responses to problems and issues</p> <p>Critically review, consolidate and extend knowledge, skills practices and thinking in a subject/discipline</p> <p>Deal with complex issues and make informed judgements in situations in the absence of complete or consistent data/information</p>	<p>Use a range of advanced and specialised skills as appropriate to a subject/discipline – for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ communicate, using appropriate methods, to a range of audiences with different levels of knowledge/expertise</li> <li>◦ communicate with peers, more senior colleagues and specialists</li> <li>◦ use a wide range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify new software or refinements/improvements to existing software to increase effectiveness</li> <li>◦ undertake critical evaluations of a wide range of numerical and graphical data</li> </ul>	<p>Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities</p> <p>Take responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others</p> <p>Take responsibility for a significant range of resources</p> <p>Demonstrate leadership and/or initiative and make an identifiable contribution to change and development</p> <p>Practice in ways which draw on critical reflection on own and others' roles and responsibilities</p> <p>Deal with complex ethical and professional issues and make informed judgements on issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices</p>

## **Anti-racism and anti-discriminatory practice**

The PQ Consortium for Social Work in Scotland is committed to an equal opportunities policy based on a belief that no person should be discriminated against because of race, colour, national or ethnic origins, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability or marital status. Each of the regional consortia also has their own equal opportunities policies (which are subject to CCETSW approval) as do the service provider agencies and academic institutions that belong to them. Members recognise the importance of integrating an equal opportunities approach within all aspects of the Consortium's functioning.

Equal opportunities in relation to access to the awards is a key component of the Consortium's policy. Monitoring of the effectiveness of this will be undertaken in relation to both registration of candidates and the achievement of awards by collecting data on the characteristics of individual candidates (in terms of gender, race, employment status, disability etc.) to establish how registered candidates differ, if at all, from the profile of qualified workers in Scotland eligible to register and, once candidates are registered, whether there are differential outcomes for different groups.

## **Appeals Procedure**

There will be a right to appeal against decisions of the Quality Assurance Sub Committee. The sole grounds for appeal will be that quality assurance procedures have not been properly followed. If the appeal is upheld the decision will be referred back to the Quality Assurance Sub Committee with a recommendation that it reconsiders its decision. If the appeal is not upheld the decision will stand and there will be no further appeal against this.

Appeals will be heard by an adhoc committee of the PQ Consortium made up of 3 of the latter's members. No Consortium member with a direct interest in the outcome of an appeal as a programme provider will be permitted to hear such an appeal.

## **Complaints Procedure**

### **1 Introduction**

The Complaints Procedure has been formulated to ensure that any formal complaints regarding the operation of the Consortium can be dealt with through a recognised mechanism. It is important to distinguish between informal complaints arising from minor or incidental problems, which should be dealt with if possible through brief discussions, and formal complaints where the complaint remains unresolved after preliminary discussions. This Complaints Procedure is there for the resolution of the latter.

An issue for consideration is whether the situation complained of results from the operation of the Consortium or concerns some activity or problem relating to an employing agency or individual members of an agency. If a complaint is against an agency or individual members of an agency then the complainer should be directed towards that agency.

Where a complaint concerns the operation of a post-qualifying programme accredited by the Consortium then the complainant would normally be expected to first make full use of that Programme provider's complaints procedure. If they remain dissatisfied with the handling of their complaint once these processes have been exhausted then they may complain to the Consortium. The Consortium will focus solely on the extent to which the complaint was dealt with under the Programme's agreed procedures.

The Consortium reserves the right to postpone consideration of a complaint if the matter complained of may have a bearing or relate to any matter that is likely to be OR is the subject of legal proceedings OR if professional confidentiality to any person in receipt of social work intervention may be breached during the process of dealing with the complaint. If the complainant so wishes, the complaints procedure may be reactivated when any legal proceedings have been fully concluded. The Consortium will take steps to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to avoid any breach of confidentiality.

## **2 Procedure**

The aim of the Complaints Procedure is to ensure equity and fairness in the operation of the Consortium and its Committees. Complaints hearings will attempt to resolve matters impartially. The Complaints Hearing is not a legal hearing.

1. Complaints should be made in writing to the Consortium Manager, who will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 14 days. (Where complaints are concerned with the Manager please refer to sections 16 - 18 of this procedure).
2. The Consortium Manager will investigate the complaint. The Manager will consider the results of the investigation and if he/she considers it appropriate make a response to the complaint. When a decision is reached at this stage, the Consortium Manager will convey the results of the investigation in writing to the Complainant, normally within 28 days of the complaint being received.
3. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the Consortium Manager then he/she should write to the Chair of the Consortium within 14 days of receiving the decision and request a Hearing before a Complaints Panel.
4. The Chair will write to the Complainant within 14 days advising of the date of the Complaints Panel, which should be convened within 28 days of the request, or as soon as possible thereafter.
5. The Complainant will be advised in writing of the composition of the Complaints Panel. He/she will also be advised of her/his right to attend the hearing and be accompanied by a colleague of her/his choice, who may speak on her/his behalf.
6. If the parties to the complaint wish the Panel to consider any written information they should submit this to the Chair of the Consortium at least 7 days prior to the date of the Panel. The Chair will arrange for copies of such documentation to be circulated to the other parties concerned and to the members of the Panel.
7. The Chair should be informed of the number and identity of witnesses the parties wish to present.

8. The Complaints Panel will consist of the Chair or her/his nominee and two members of the Management Committee or Consortium sub-committees. No one can be appointed as a Panel member if they have been involved in previous discussions about the complaint, or if they were party to decisions or procedures that are now the subject of the complaint.
9. The Chair of the Consortium or her/his nominee will Chair the Complaints Panel.
10. The Chair of the Panel has the power to request the attendance of any witness(es) that he/she considers relevant to the consideration of the complaint.
11. The conduct of any Hearing will be at the discretion of its Chair guided by the requirements of these procedures.
12. The Chair of the Panel will ask all parties to the complaint, including witnesses, to withdraw prior to the Complaints Panel making its decision.
13. The Chair of the Panel has the power to adjourn the Hearing for further information/guidance to be gathered.
14. The Complainant will receive the Panel's decision in writing, signed by the Chair of the Panel within 7 days.
15. The Complainant has no right of appeal against the decision of the Complaints Panel but may decide to make a complaint to SSSC (formerly CCETSW).
16. Where the complaint concerns the Consortium Manager then the matter should be put in writing to the Chair of the Consortium. He/she will arrange for the matter to be investigated by a member of the Consortium Management Committee.
17. The member charged with the investigation will, following the investigation, make a response to the complaint. They should convey this in writing to the complainant, normally within 28 days of the complaint being received.
18. Where the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of this complaint the procedure outlined in sections 3 – 15 of this procedure applies.