

The IB complaints procedure

This procedure has been created to assist all the International Baccalaureate's ("IB") external stakeholders with the resolution of complaints related to certain IB services.

The IB is committed to providing an excellent quality of service. We value your views and feedback we receive and aim to make continuous improvements to this mission.

The IB Answers service (ibanswers.ibo.org) is a dedicated hotline to answer your queries.

If you have a query, please contact IB Answers so that – wherever possible – we can answer any queries before they become complaints.

To enable the IB to handle your complaints effectively, we ask that you follow the procedure defined below.

Principles of the procedure

To ensure the complaints process is effective, the following principles are applied throughout the complaints process and provide a framework for communication between stakeholders and IB staff.

Fairness – we aim to have a fair complaints procedure that ensures everyone is treated equally.

Courtesy – all communication in relation to this procedure should be based on mutual respect, trust and courtesy.

Accessibility – we aim to have a complaints procedure that is easy to understand, easy to access and well publicized.

Timeliness – we aim to ensure that all complaints are dealt with in a timely manner.

Effectiveness – the complaints procedure is monitored and reviewed to ensure it continues to be effective.

Attentiveness – you will be given every opportunity to put forward your complaint, and you can be assured that we are listening. We will update you on the process and status of your complaint as appropriate.

Scope of the procedure

What this procedure covers

Anyone who has directly accessed the IB's services, and has concerns about those services, can make a complaint to the IB which, in most cases, will result in a formal response.

To maximize the chances of a quick resolution, we ask that you submit your complaint within a period of 3 months following the incident. The IB is committed to handle it sensitively and efficiently in line with the principles of our procedure as listed above.

What this procedure does not cover

Please be aware that there are some matters that cannot be dealt with under this procedure because the IB has no legal right to do so or because there already is a separate procedure in place. The matters that cannot be dealt with are:

- *Complaints regarding decisions made by an IB World School*

IB World Schools are entirely independent from the IB and are solely responsible for the implementation and quality of teaching of the programmes. The IB has no jurisdiction over decisions made by the IB World Schools, as set forth in the General Regulations.

As a result, the IB does not resolve complaints by students, their legal guardians or teachers regarding decisions which fall within the remit of the IB World Schools. If you wish to make a complaint regarding such decisions you will need to contact the IB World School and, where they exist, you should follow the internal complaints procedures set out by the relevant IB World School.

Although we cannot treat such matters as a complaint under this policy, where matters regarding the implementation of IB programmes by an IB World School are brought to the attention of the Customer Service team, they will be passed onto the appropriate team for their information. When appropriate, matters may be raised or passed onto the school in question. Where concerns are raised about improper practices occurring within IB schools, the IB's whistleblowing policy may be applicable: [refer to whistleblowing policy](#). It is important for anyone who wishes to report concerns regarding improper practices to first review the whistleblowing policy.

- *Requests for the re-marking of Diploma Programme, Career-related Programme or Middle Years Programme work; appeals against examination results or other assessment decisions*
- There is a separate procedure to deal with re-marking of Diploma Programme, Career-related Programme and Middle Years Programme work. All requests for the re-marking of work or appeals against examination results or other assessment decisions must follow the procedures outlined in the handbook of procedures for coordinators and the General Regulations. Requests for remarking must be initiated by the IB Coordinator, who also registers candidates for retakes and will assist with any assessment issues. Candidates or their legal guardians should contact the IB Coordinator in their school.
- *Decisions relating to candidacy or the authorization of IB World Schools;*
- *Other issues the IB may deem does not fall within its mandate to investigate or make a determination on*

Making a complaint

Prior to making a complaint

Before submitting a complaint under this procedure, you need to determine if your issue relates to a matter that can be dealt with through this process¹.

1. First, check in the section above to see if your issue is a matter that the IB can help resolve.

¹ Complaints submitted which concern matters that cannot be dealt with via this procedure will not be treated as a complaint. The Customer Service team will respond and endeavour to direct your enquiry on to the correct person or process for your matter.

2. If your issue relates to an assessment decision, you must follow the procedures found in the *General regulations: Diploma Programme, Career-related Programme or Middle Years Programme* (<http://www.ibo.org/become/resources/>) or contact your coordinator, as appropriate.
3. If you have an issue that relates to an IB service or department that you are already in contact with we encourage that, where possible, you initially try to resolve the situation informally before submitting a formal complaint under this procedure. Attempting to resolve the situation informally does not prevent you from making a formal complaint at a later stage if necessary. The IB Ombudsman is also available to facilitate informal resolutions when possible to do so (<http://www.ibo.org/ombudsman>).

Submitting a formal complaint

If it has not been possible to resolve your issue informally or you wish to submit a formal complaint, the following procedure outlines how to submit your complaint to the IB:

Initial submission of a formal complaint²

Complaints should be submitted in writing to the email address complaints@ibo.org³.

Please provide as much information as possible about the nature of your complaint and the departments or services involved. Specifically, you must supply us with the following:

- Your name, a contact address and telephone number or email address to allow the IB to contact you with regards to the complaint.
- If you are an IB student (or legal guardian of an IB student), the name and code of the IB World School which you attend or have attended.
- If you are an IB Educator, your personal code and your role(s).
- The service and/or department your complaint relates to.
- The details of your complaint including any previous attempts to resolve the matter and copies of all relevant documentation (where available).

The Customer Service team will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three business days and will forward your complaint to the appropriate head of department, director or chief officer.

The head of department, director or chief officer will oversee an investigation of the matter, and you may be contacted for further information if this is necessary. The head, director or chief officer will aim to respond to you with his or her conclusions within fifteen business days of receipt of the complaint from the Customer Service team. Where more time is required you will be notified, with an estimate of the timeline for receiving a final response.

The IB reserves the right to cease corresponding with a complainant if their correspondence is, in our reasonable opinion, frivolous, vexatious, abusive or if the matter has reached a conclusion within the framework of the formal complaint process.

² Please note that complaints that are not submitted in accordance with this process will not be processed.

³ Please note that the IB cannot accept formal complaints via telephone.

Appeal against the response of the head of department, director or chief officer

If your complaint falls within the scope of this procedure, and you remain dissatisfied with the response you receive, you may appeal to the Director General of the IB.

The appeal to the Director General should be made within fifteen business days of you receiving a final response from the head, director or chief officer. Please provide full details of the reasons for the appeal and any relevant information including all correspondence with the IB in relation to the complaint and the response you have received from the head, director or chief officer.

Your appeal should be clearly marked as “an appeal against the response received in relation to a complaint”, be addressed to the Director General and emailed to: director.general@ibo.org

Please note that you will not receive a response if you have not first submitted your complaint through complaints@ibo.org and received a reply from a head of department, director or chief officer. Similar to the submission of complaints, receipt of your application will be acknowledged within three business days.

The Director General will aim to communicate to you the outcome of his/her review within thirty business days of receiving your application. Where more time is required, you will be contacted without delay and provided with an update on progress of the review and an estimate of when you will receive a final response.

Office of the Ombudsman as an alternative, informal option

The IB Office of the Ombudsman is an independent, informal, impartial and confidential resource observing the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice under the International Ombudsman Association (IOA). The Office is accessible to those with an IB-related concern, such as one related to an IB decision, process, policy or practice.

The IB Ombudsman is an alternative and independent channel that offers an informal and confidential method of dealing with your complaint or concern. While the IB Ombudsman can facilitate a resolution whenever appropriate, s/he is not a part of the formal complaints procedure and does not adjudicate or enforce decisions on behalf of the IB. It is also important to note that the Ombudsman is a voluntary place of contact and works with, but is independent of, the IB's management structure to remain impartial.

The Ombudsman is an off-the-record and impartial resource that listens, helps to evaluate and assess the matter, and may work with the individual or group to help generate options for addressing an issue, including raising questions and making recommendations when appropriate. The Ombudsman may also help identify relevant procedures, policies or information, and may accept or give referrals to other resources at the IB, including guidance on the IB formal Complaints Procedure. The Ombudsman considers multiple perspectives and tries to help interested parties reach an understanding that would work for all concerned. S/he does not advocate for a person, entity or a position. Feedback about the IB is always welcome through the Ombudsman channel, and the Ombudsman can forward such feedback to the appropriate IB area(s) while also ensuring confidentiality and attention to sensitive issues.

(Note: Identifying records are not maintained by the Office, and confidentiality is strictly observed by the Ombudsman (except in the case of an imminent risk of serious harm). As an independent, informal, confidential and impartial resource, the Ombudsman does not serve as a place of notice to the IB or act as its agent, and cannot take sides on a matter or participate in formal processes on behalf of the IB or anyone who contacts the Office. The IB Ombudsman works within the scope of the IB's reach as an organization, and it is important to understand that s/he cannot interfere in a school's internal operations or governance.

Those seeking to use the Office as a resource are expected to respect the Ombudsman's function under the IOA Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics, which may not be waived).

As you consider the Office of the Ombudsman as a possible resource, please review the information on the IB Office of the Ombudsman available at <http://www.ibo.org/ombudsman>