

# What happens when you make a complaint to the Office?

---

A complainant's first point of contact with the Queensland Ombudsman is with the Registration and Preliminary Assessment team. Within this team, complaints are registered and assessed against the *Ombudsman Act 2001* (Qld) (the Act).

The main function of this preliminary assessment process is to determine whether the complaint can be dealt with by the Ombudsman and if it is ready for investigation. The process does not usually involve any evaluation of the merits of the complaint. Specifically, an assessment is carried out to ascertain whether the complaint has been made in time, is a

matter within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction, and whether the complainant has sufficient direct interest in the matters complained of. The Ombudsman will generally decline to investigate the complaint where these criteria are not established.

A delegated officer may also decline to investigate the complaint where another complaints entity can investigate the complaint, or where the complainant has another right of review and it would be reasonable to require the complainant to exhaust that right of review before any investigation takes place. Generally, this will mean that a complainant will be required to pursue their complaint through the internal complaints process within the relevant agency before the Ombudsman will investigate. Where a complaint has not been considered or reviewed under the agency's appropriate complaints procedure, an enquiry officer may decline to investigate on the basis that the matter is premature for the Office to investigate. Where appropriate, an enquiry officer may refer the complaint directly to the agency for attention with the consent of the complainant. Some of the factors considered in deciding to directly refer a complaint include whether the complainant presents some vulnerability which would mean that the complainant may have difficulty accessing the complaints management system of an agency or due to the nature of the concerns raised.

To carry out the preliminary assessment, further information may be required from either the complainant or the agency concerned. It is for this reason that delegated officers are empowered under the Act to make enquiries with an agency and to acquire any information relevant to the assessment of the complaint. Where all internal review rights have been

exhausted, and the above criteria are satisfied, the complaint will be passed on to the investigation and resolution unit for further assessment by this Office.

Find out more about [the complaints process](#) >

Last updated: 29 November 2017