



# Queen Margaret University

CONSUMER DISPUTE RESOLUTION  
CENTRE



invite you to apply to study for the following  
qualification:

## **B1068 - PROFESSIONAL AWARD IN OMBUDSMAN AND COMPLAINT HANDLING PRACTICE**

**Managing the Complaint Journey**

Approved by the Ombudsman Association

27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018 at Queen Margaret University,  
Edinburgh

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**OMBUDSMAN**  
ASSOCIATION  
Promoting independent complaint resolution

## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>COURSE CONTENT .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>AREAS OF STUDY &amp; LEARNING OUTCOMES.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>TIMETABLE .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>COURSE LEARNING EXPERIENCES, PRE &amp; POST COURSE WORK.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>ABOUT QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY.....</b>	<b>8</b>

## Introduction

This course is aimed primarily at those working in the assessment and investigative functions of ombudsman and other second-tier complaint handling organisations. Its purpose will be to equip assessors and investigators with the practical skills and background knowledge necessary to discharge those functions to a high level of competence.

The Award has been designed to take participants through the journey of a complaint, from receipt to decision. The emphasis is on practice, using a case-study based approach reflecting the nature of Ombudsman and complaint handling work. It is based on two days of training plus pre-course work and a post-course assessment (which together total 100 learning hours). On completion of the assessment, a participant will gain the Professional Award in Ombudsman and Complaint Handling Practice (10 credit points at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 7 (or the first year of a Degree Programme)).

The Ombudsman Association standards/competencies for investigative staff have informed the content and learning outcomes for the programmes. These are shown in the next section on course delivery. Web-based platforms will be used to enhance learning. Among other benefits, this may allow for the exchange of views and best practice ideas between participants from different organisations across the UK, Ireland and beyond.

The cost per delegate is **£800** which includes all course material, registration as a student of QMU, tutor support, course assessment, quality assurance, refreshments and lunch on the course.

If you would like to reserve a place on this course, please email [cdrc@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:cdrc@qmu.ac.uk)

As a matriculated student of QMU, you will enjoy the usual benefits of access to an extensive range of electronic library resources, many other University resources and, if you apply for a student card, student discounts.

Email [cbrennan@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:cbrennan@qmu.ac.uk) if you would like to find out more about this course or if you would like to discuss delivery of the course in-house for your organisation..

## PROFESSIONAL AWARD IN OMBUDSMAN AND COMPLAINT HANDLING PRACTICE

### Course Content

This section provides information on course content for the Professional Award in Ombudsman and Complaint Handling Practice, which covers all 12 of the Ombudsman Association competencies. In consultation with its membership, the Ombudsman Association has identified the following 12 complaint-handling standards or competencies for the investigative staff within its member schemes. These are known as Units:

<b>Unit 1</b>	Complaint assessment and alternatives to investigating
<b>Unit 2</b>	Effective investigation
<b>Unit 3</b>	Reaching and acting on findings
<b>Unit 4</b>	Providing a high impact service that is responsive, transparent, empathetic, authoritative, standards based and proportionate
<b>Unit 5</b>	Operating within legal and procedural frameworks
<b>Unit 6</b>	Communicating effectively
<b>Unit 7</b>	Producing clear, unambiguous written documents
<b>Unit 8</b>	Effectively managing data
<b>Unit 9</b>	Researching, managing and presenting knowledge and information from a variety of sources
<b>Unit 10</b>	Maintaining personal security and safety and being alert to the security of others
<b>Unit 11</b>	Managing your own resources and professional development
<b>Unit 12</b>	Working together and promoting diversity

The Professional Award in Ombudsman and Complaint Handling Practice covers four areas which include the following Ombudsman Association recommended complaint handling standards:

- Complaint diagnosis (Unit 1 and Unit 5) and Investigation (Unit 2 and Unit 5)
- Decision-making and remedy (Unit 3)
- Principles of customer service (Unit 4)
- Effective oral and written communication (Units 6 and 7)

The Ombudsman Association recommended complaint handling standards 8-12 are embedded in the course.

# PROFESSIONAL AWARD IN OMBUDSMAN AND COMPLAINT HANDLING PRACTICE

## Areas of Study and Learning Outcomes

### **Complaint diagnosis (Units 1 and 5) and Investigation (Units 2 and 5)**

- L1: Understand the importance of having objective criteria for assessment of complaints
- L2: Assess complaints against relevant legal and other criteria
- L3: Make reliable decisions on whether to investigate and, as appropriate, to seek alternative forms of resolution
- L4: Gather and evaluate oral and written evidence

### **Decision-making and remedy (Unit 3)**

- L1: Reach reliable findings
- L2: Understand the principles of remedy and redress
- L3: Make proportionate recommendations for remedy, including, as appropriate, for the remedy of systemic failings
- L4: Achieve 'closure'

### **Principles of customer service (Unit 4)**

- L1: Establish professional, ethical and empathetic rapport with complainants and other stakeholders
- L2: Structure a sustainable professional and ethical relationship for the course of the investigation
- L3: Manage conflict effectively and ethically
- L4: Make the process accessible and ethical

### **Effective oral and written communication (Units 6 and 7)**

- L1: Understand the principles of effective communication
- L2: Demonstrate effective listening and observational skills
- L3: Conduct an effective interview in person and by telephone
- L4: Write effective reports on investigations

# PROFESSIONAL AWARD IN OMBUDSMAN AND COMPLAINT HANDLING PRACTICE

## Timetable

	Day One	Day Two
<b>Start</b> 09.15	Welcome and Introductions  Complaint Diagnosis  Principles of customer service (1)	Review of Day One  Decision-making and remedy (1)  Principles of customer service (2)
12.30	Lunch	Lunch
13.30	Effective oral and written communication (1)  Complaint Investigation	Decision-making and remedy (2)  Effective oral and written communication (2)
16.30	Award Assignment	Evaluation, Review and Close

## Course Learning Experiences

Course learning experiences include lectures, case studies, narrated Powerpoints, directed study, video clips, practical exercises, role play exercises, group exercises, quizzes and structured discussions.

## Professional Award Pre-Course Work

It is anticipated that the course participants will need to spend 5 hours on their pre-course work. This will include:

- Preparation of a 500 word summary on their scheme/their complaint handling, or other relevant, experience to date - to be submitted in advance of the course start date
- Reading the Case Study documents
- Gaining familiarity with Study Skills, including those relevant to researching, managing and presenting knowledge and information
- Completing tasks related to the areas of study.

- Selected reading of relevance to the core course content

Details of the pre-course work will be sent to participants approximately two weeks in advance of the course start date.

## **Professional Award Post-Course Work**

The Professional Award in Ombudsman and Complaint Handling Practice is assessed by a post-course 2,000 word assignment. Within the framework of the learning outcomes set out for the course, participants will produce a report on a subject relevant to the course. The aim of the assignment is to provide participants with an opportunity to demonstrate their competence in the application of learning from the course. Participants will do this through a combination of the learning experiences from the course, their own experience and guided research support from the course tutors.

Participants have eight weeks after the course end date to produce and submit their assignment. Tutor support is available during this period. The tutor will assist participants with their selection of appropriate topics on which to write, help them to develop their approach and offer further guidance as they progress their assignments to completion. QMU has an Effective Learning Service to assist colleagues with various study skills such as active reading, critical thinking, making effective notes, planning and writing and structuring assignments. All documents are accessible online.

Assessment of the Professional Award in Ombudsman and Complaint Handling Practice assignments are subject to moderation by QMU academic staff and by an external examiner. Marks are ratified by a Board of Examiners. Quality is overseen by the School Academic Board which requires periodic reports on the effectiveness of the arrangements for learning, teaching and assessment.

On successful completion of the course, participants will receive a Record of Achievement together with an official transcript from QMU sent to their designated contact address.

## ABOUT QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY



Queen Margaret University has a proud history of achievement and progress extending for over a century. Founded in 1875, the institution has always been driven by the highest ideals and purposes, focusing on contributing in practical ways to improving the quality of life and serving the community. Colleagues are dedicated to delivering vocational and professional learning and specialising in research which is of value to the community and enhances people's lives.

QMU is a leader in relation to the application of IT to teaching. Features of the IT provision include remote access which provides web access to email, files and software from anywhere in the world.

The University's Learning Resource Centre is designed to meet the needs of all students whether they study on or at a distance to the campus. By making full use of e-Learning, we can design courses that support students who have work and other life commitments.

QMU has over 100 staff in the School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management and is committed to providing training courses tailored to client needs. QMU has unique expertise in consumer dispute resolution developed over 25 years, experience of research, CPD training and consultancy in customer service, complaint investigation, complaint handling, consumer regulation, marketing and consumer policy. During the last five years, the Consumer Dispute Resolution Centre has provided ombudsman and complaint handling practice training for over 2,500 delegates from a wide range of ombudsman and complaint handling organisations in the UK, Ireland and internationally in Vienna (for the International Ombudsman Institute), in Durban (for the African Ombudsman Research Centre) and Bangkok (for the Asian Ombudsman Association).

### Quality Assurance

For all aspects of learning, teaching and research, Queen Margaret University operates its own policies and procedures for the management of academic quality and standards, within a framework of published guidelines and periodic external review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). The QAA monitors our adherence to codes of practice for the sector, covering activities such as research and consultancy.