



*Sultanate of Oman
Oman Authority for
Academic Accreditation and
Quality Assurance of Education*



OMAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK APPEALS MANUAL

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FOREWORD

On behalf of the Board of the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA) I have pleasure in welcoming you to the Oman Qualifications Framework Appeals Manual, which provides information to all Awarding Bodies on the process for appeals against decisions relating to Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing and Re-Alignment.

The Oman Qualifications Framework (OQF) is a comprehensive, integrated and mandatory National Qualifications Framework (NQF) that includes qualifications from all public and private sectors of education and training in Oman. Royal Decree 9/2021 requires that all Omani qualifications are Listed on the OQF and Foreign and International qualifications are Aligned to it.

The OQF is applicable to all Omani and Foreign and International Awarding Bodies that offer qualifications in Oman. As it is based on one set of generic Level Descriptors, the OQF enhances the quality standards for all qualifications delivered in Oman and promotes parity of esteem between academic, technological, professional and technical and vocational qualifications. Listed and Aligned qualifications are placed on the National Register of Qualifications (NRQ) available to stakeholders and the general public.

Governed by the OAAAQA Board, the OQF is managed by the OAAAQA Executive Office and implemented by the Directorate General of the National Qualifications Framework (DGNQF).

The OQF Appeals Manual is a reflection of the OAAAQA's ongoing endeavours to implement the OQF. Besides adhering to national legal requirements in terms of timelines and procedures that safeguard the fairness of the appeal system, the OAAAQA ensures that it delivers a rational, robust and transparent process for OQF appeals which is regularly reviewed and enhanced to ensure that Awarding Bodies have confidence in the OAAAQA to deliver independent, impartial outcomes.

The OQF Appeals Manual contains guidance for those considering making an appeal against an OQF decision while also providing important information for members of OQF Appeal Committees. All parties involved in the OQF appeal process are highly encouraged to study this manual carefully prior to engaging in any activities relating to an appeal.

HE Prof Rahma Al Mahrooqi

Board Chairperson

Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	2
PART A: The Oman Authority for academic accreditation and quality assurance of education	3
1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 The Oman Qualifications Framework	4
1.2 Listing and Alignment of Qualifications	4
1.2.1 Listing and Alignment Evaluation	5
1.3 Re-Listing or Re-Alignment of Qualifications	6
Part B: OQF Appeal Process	8
2. Introduction to the OQF Appeal Process	9
2.1 Language of the OQF Appeal Process	9
2.2 OQF Appeal Process	9
2.2.1 Overview of the OQF Appeal Process	10
2.2.2 OQF Appeal Submission	11
2.2.3 Stages of the OQF Appeal Process	11
3. Subject of an OQF Appeal	15
3.1 Subject of an OQF Appeal Against a Listing or Alignment Evaluation	15
3.2 Subject of Appeal against a Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review	15
3.3 Not subject to an OQF Appeal	15
4. Grounds for an OQF Appeal	16
4.1 Admissible Grounds for an OQF Appeal	16
4.2 Non-admissible Grounds for an OQF Appeal	16
4.3 Grounds for Rejection of an OQF Appeal	16
5. The OQF Appeal Application and Submission	17
5.1 The OQF Appeal Application Form	17
5.2 The OQF Appeal Submission Form	17
5.2.1 Instructions for submitting the OQF Appeal Submission to the DGNQF	17
5.2.2 OQF Appeal Fee	18
6. The OQF Appeal Committee	18
6.1 Purpose of the OQF Appeal Committee	18
6.2 Administration and Composition of the OQF Appeal Committee	18
6.2.1 OQF Appeal Committee Coordinator (OQFACC)	18
6.2.2 Consultation with the Appellant Awarding Body	19
6.2.3 OQF Appeal Committee Member Confidentiality Declaration	19
6.2.4 Director General of the DGNQF	19
7. OQF Appeal Committee Process and Deliberations	19
7.1 OQF Appeal Committee Process	19
7.1.1 Response to the OQF Appeal Submission	21
7.2 OQF Appeal Committee Decision	21
8. Responsibilities For the OQF Appeal Process	22
8.1 Responsibilities of the OAAAQA Board	22
8.2 Responsibilities of the OAAAQA CEO	22
8.3 Responsibilities of the Director General of the DGNQF	23
8.4 Responsibilities of the OQF Appeal Committee Coordinator (OQFACC)	24
8.5 Responsibilities OQF Appeal Committee	25
9. Communication	25

10. Conflict of Interest	25
10.1 Personal Conflict of Interest	26
10.2 Professional Conflict of Interest	26
11. Undue Influence	26
12. Confidentiality	27
13. Cost of OQF Appeals	27
14. Further Information	27
PART C: APPENDICES	28
Appendix A: References	29
Appendix B: Acronyms and Glossary of Terms	30
Appendix C: Forms Relating to OQF Appeals	33
Appendix C1: OQF Confidentiality Declaration	33
Appendix C2: OQF Appeal Application Form.....	34
Appendix C3: OQF Appeal Submission Form.....	37
Appendix D: Guidance note For An Awarding Body on the Submission of an OQF Appeal.....	40
Appendix E: Guidance Note for oqf Appeal Committee Members	43
Appendix F: FREQUENTLY Asked Questions For OQF Appeals	47
NOTES	48

**PART A: THE OMAN AUTHORITY FOR ACADEMIC
ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE OF
EDUCATION**

1. INTRODUCTION

Royal Decree 9/2021 established the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA).¹ The OAAAQA Board, appointed by the Cabinet of Ministers, has governance responsibilities for all OAAAQA activities, which includes development of 'a national quality assurance system for school education and higher education in the Sultanate' and 'prepare and develop the comprehensive Oman Qualifications Framework, List Omani qualifications on it and Align Foreign and International qualifications to it'.

The OAAAQA comprises:

- The Executive Office, comprising technical and administrative staff with responsibility for the Authority's day-to-day activities within the following three Directorates:
 - Centre of School Education Quality Assurance (CSEQA)
 - Centre of Higher Education Quality Assurance (CHEQA)
 - Directorate General of the National Qualifications Framework (DGNQF)²
- A National Register of External Reviewers, approved by the OAAAQA Board, for external review activities and OQF activities

1.1 The Oman Qualifications Framework

The OQF is defined as:

An instrument to describe, compare and classify qualifications from all sectors of education and training in Oman. It is based on one set of generic Level Descriptors, which describe the expected outcomes at each of its ten levels. The OQF provides a reference point for qualifications delivered and awarded in Oman; the comparison between Omani qualifications and Foreign or International qualifications; and the Recognition of Prior Learning

The OQF is governed by the OAAAQA Board, managed by the OAAAQA Executive Office and implemented by the Directorate General of the National Qualifications Framework (DGNQF). The roles and responsibilities are given in the OAAAQA Policy for the Governance, Management and Implementation of the OQF.³

The OQF Document (2023) includes the OAAAQA policies relating to the OQF and the OQF Manual (2023) provides detailed information on the OQF processes for Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing and Re-Alignment. The OQF Document and OQF Manual can be downloaded from <https://oaaaqa.gov.om/Oman-Qualifications-Framework/The-OQF-Manual>.

This OQF Appeals Manual details the process for an Awarding Body considering raising an OQF appeal against a Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Report and/or outcome.

1.2 Listing and Alignment of Qualifications

Omani qualifications are Listed on the OQF. Listing is defined as 'an evaluation of an Omani qualification against the Listing Criteria and the OQF Level Descriptors to determine the OQF Level and OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification'.

Foreign and International qualifications are Aligned to the OQF. Alignment is defined as 'an evaluation of a Foreign or International qualification against the Alignment Criteria and the

¹ Royal Decree 9/2021, issued on 13/01/2021

² Manages and implements all activities associated with the OQF

³ OAAAQA (2023), OQF Document

OQF Level Descriptors to determine the OQF Level that the qualification aligns to and where relevant, the comparable OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification’.

Listed and Aligned qualifications are placed on the National Register of Qualifications (NRQ).

1.2.1 Listing and Alignment Evaluation

A Listing or Alignment evaluation is carried out by a Panel established by the DGNQF. Each Listing or Alignment Panel comprises a minimum of two OQF External Reviewers (OQFERs) and an OQF Review Director (OQFRD).

Listing or Alignment Panel members must:

- Have knowledge and experience of the subject area of the qualification
- Have completed the OAAAQA capacity building training on the Listing or Alignment process
- Be from different organisations
- Have no conflict of interest with the Awarding Body

The OQF Document provides the OAAAQA policies for the Listing and Alignment of qualifications⁴ along with detailed information on the nine-stage process for Listing and Alignment, illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Nine--Stage Listing and Alignment Evaluation Process			
#	Stage	Responsibility	Summary
1.	Proposal	Awarding Body Listing or Alignment Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An evaluation of the programme that leads to the qualification to ensure the Listing or Alignment Criteria are met • Proposal for the OQF Level and Credit Value for each module and for the entire qualification • Completion of the on-line Listing or Alignment Application Form
2.	Recommendation	OQF Listing or Alignment Panel	<p>An external review of the evidence from the Awarding Body, by the OQF External Reviewers (OQFERs) to recommend the qualification for Listing or Alignment by ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Listing or Alignment Criteria are met including the institutional quality assurance and communication arrangements for Foreign or International qualifications • Whether the Awarding Body’s proposal for the OQF Level and OQF Credit Value is justified
3.	Verification	OQF Review Director	A review of the recommendations from the OQFERs and a check on a sample of modules comprising the qualification ⁵
4	Preparation	OQF Listing or Alignment Panel Director General DGNQF	Preparation of the First Draft of the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report for review by the Director General DGNQF before being sent to the Awarding Body
5	Review	Awarding Body	Review of the First Draft of the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report to check for accuracy and provide comment, as required
6	Finalisation	OQF Listing or Alignment Panel Director General DGNQF	Consideration of feedback from the Awarding Body and taking appropriate action to reach the Second Draft of the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report for review by the Director General DGNQF before being sent to the OAAAQA CEO for consideration for Approval

⁴ OAAAQA (2023) OQF Document: Section 6

⁵ In May 2021 this was 20%

Table 1: Nine--Stage Listing and Alignment Evaluation Process			
#	Stage	Responsibility	Summary
7	Approval of Report	OAAAQA CEO	Approval of the Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report
8	Approval of outcome	OAAAQA Board	Approval of the Listing or Alignment Evaluation outcome
9	Notification	Director General DGNQF	Informing the Awarding Body of the approved Listing or Alignment Evaluation outcome and calling attention to the opportunity that the Awarding Body may appeal the Report and/or the outcome

If the approved outcome is:

- Recommended for Listing or Alignment, the qualification is placed on the NRQ
- Recommended for Listing or Alignment with Condition, the qualification is not placed on the NRQ until the condition is met
- Not Recommended for Listing or Alignment, the qualification is not placed on the NRQ

1.3 Re-Listing or Re-Alignment of Qualifications

All Listed or Aligned qualifications are subject to Re-Listing or Re-Alignment on a cyclical basis. Re-Listing and Re-Alignment is defined as 'a review process for Listed and Aligned qualifications to ensure that the Listing or Alignment Criteria were maintained throughout the delivery of the qualification and no major changes were made to the Learning Outcomes of the units, modules or courses that impacted on the OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value of the qualification'.

The first Re-Listing or Re-Alignment is takes place after the first cohort of learners has completed the qualification. As long as the qualification continues to be delivered it is subject to further Re-Listing or Re-Alignment reviews at intervals specified by the DGNQF and approved by the OAAAQA Board.⁶

The Director General of the DGNQF establishes a Panel for each Re-Listing or Re-Alignment application. The members must:

- Have undergone OAAAQA capacity building training on the processes for Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing and Re-Alignment
- Have no conflict of interest with the Awarding Body

Re-Listing or Re-Alignment is carried out following the OAAAQA Policy for Re-Listing and Re-Alignment of Qualifications on the OQF.⁷ <https://oaaqa.gov.om/Oman-Qualifications-Framework/OQFDocuments/Policies>

⁶ The Re-Listing and Re-Alignment process is cyclical according to the type of qualification (for example, a Bachelor's is Re-Listed every five years).

⁷ OAAAQA (2023), OQF Document, Appendix C5

At the conclusion of the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review, the Director General of the DGNQF informs the Awarding Body of the OAAAQA Board's decision and submits the approved Final Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report to the Awarding Body together with a covering letter informing of the opportunity to appeal the Final Review Report and/or outcome. If the approved outcome is:

- Recommended for Re-Listing or Re-Alignment, the qualification remains on the NRQ
- Recommended for Re-Listing or Re-Alignment with Condition:
 - The qualification remains on the NRQ
 - The outcome `Re-Listed with Condition` or `Re-Aligned with Condition` is entered on the NRQ along with the agreed date for meeting the condition
 - The condition placed on the qualification must be addressed by the Awarding Body within a timeframe agreed between the Awarding Body and the Director General of the DGNQF
 - If the condition is not addressed within the agreed timeframe, with approval from the OAAAQA Board, the qualification is removed from the NRQ
- Not Recommended for Re-Listing or Re-Alignment, depending on the outcome of an appeal (if any), and on approval of the OAAAQA Board, the qualification is placed in the archive section of the NRQ

PART B: OQF APPEAL PROCESS

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE OQF APPEAL PROCESS

An OQF appeal can only be made by an Awarding Body after it has received the **Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report** or the **Final Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report** with the OAAAQA Board's approved outcome of the Listing or Alignment evaluation or the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review from the Director General of the DGNQF.⁸

Awarding Bodies continuing to have concerns with issues that were raised with the Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Panel and/or the DGNQF on the First Draft of the Evaluation Report or Review Report may appeal against the **Final Report** and/or outcome.

In the event that an Awarding Body raises an OQF appeal against a:

- **Listing or Alignment outcome**, the qualification is not placed the NRQ until the OQF appeal decision (see section 7.2)
- **Re-Listing or Re-Alignment outcome** the qualification is not removed from the NRQ until the OQF appeal decision (see section 7.2)

2.1 Language of the OQF Appeal Process

An OQF appeal is addressed in the language that the Awarding Body submitted the OQF Application for Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment to the DGNQF.

2.2 OQF Appeal Process

An overview of the OQF appeal process with the required timeline is given in Figure 1. A detailed description of each stage of the OQF appeal process is given in Table 2.

⁸ For example, see Table 1, stage 9

2.2.1 Overview of the OQF Appeal Process

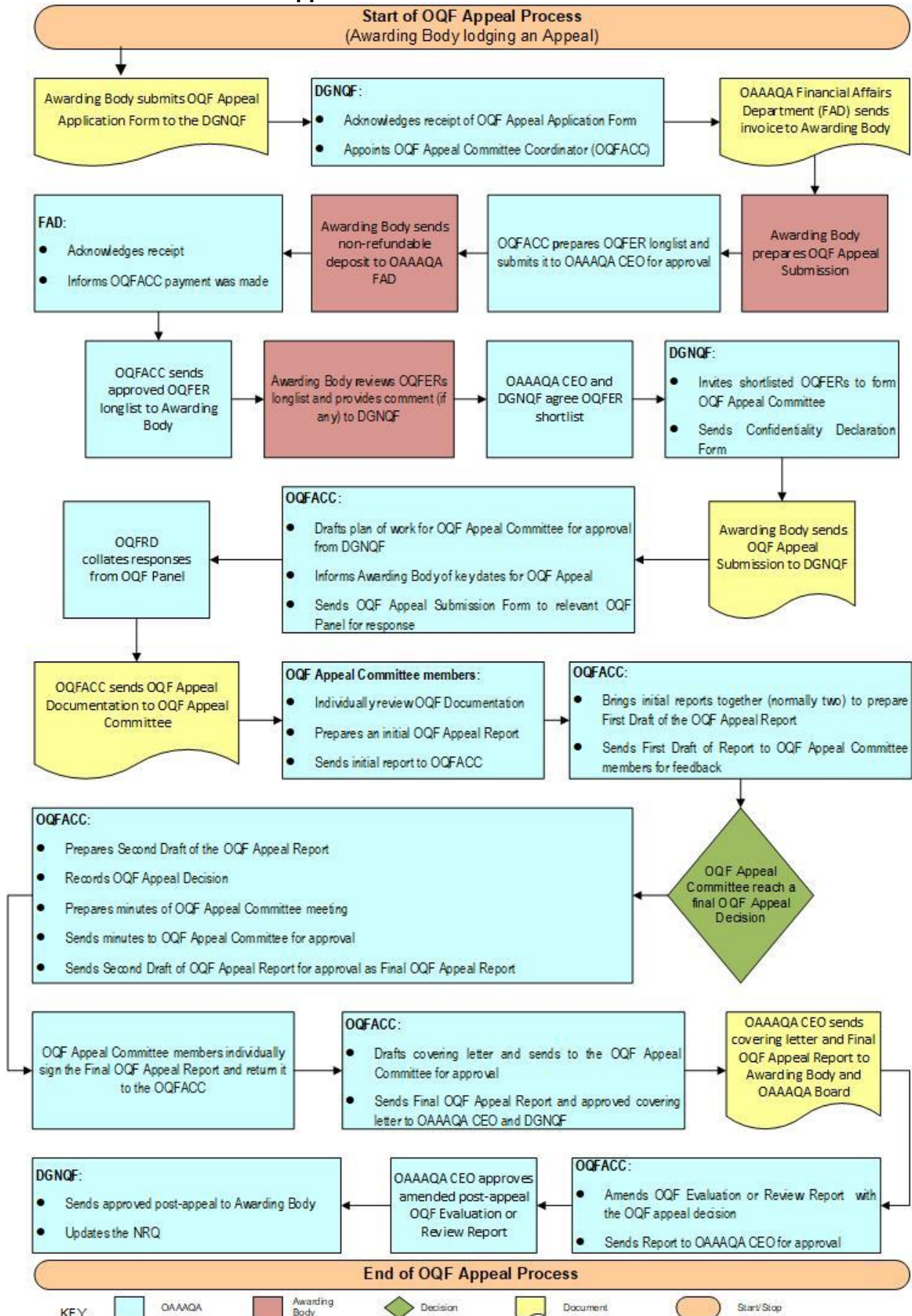


Figure 1: OQF Appeal Process

2.2.2 OQF Appeal Submission

The OQF Appeal Submission Form **MUST** be sent by the Awarding Body to the Director General within 60 calendar days of the Awarding Body’s receipt of the **Final** Evaluation or Review Report, (see Figure 2). **An OQF Appeal Submission received later than 60 calendar days is rejected.**

In the event that an Awarding Body wants to raise an OQF appeal, the OAAAQA respectfully requests that the OQF Appeal Application Form is sent to the Director General of the DGNQF as soon as possible, preferably within ten working days of the Awarding Body receiving the Final Evaluation or Review Report. The OQF Appeal Application Form informs the DGNQF of the Awarding Body’s intention to raise an appeal, allowing the Director General to commence the first stages of the OQF appeal activities as described in Table 2.

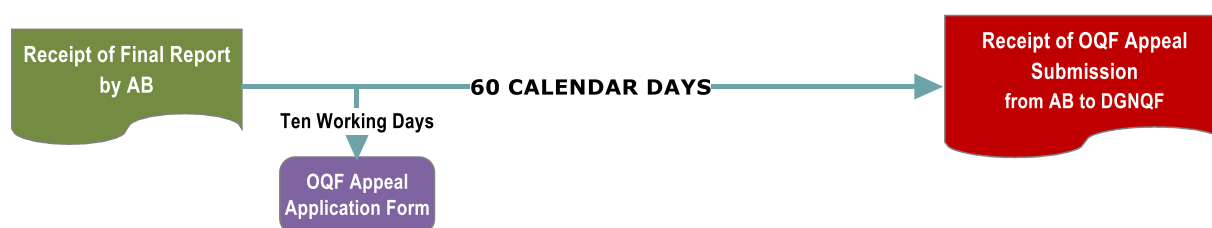


Figure 2: Timescale for the OQF Appeal Submission

2.2.3 Stages of the OQF Appeal Process

Table 2: Stages of the OQF Appeal Process			
Indicative Timetable	Task	Activity	Responsibility
	1	The Awarding Body receives the Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the Final Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report from the Director General DGNQF	Director General DGNQF
	2	The Awarding Body indicates the intention to lodge an appeal by submitting the OQF Appeal Application Form (Appendix C2) to the Director General DGNQF	Awarding Body
	3	The Director General DGNQF: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges receipt of the OQF Appeal Application Form to the Awarding Body • Informs the OAAAQA CEO of an impending OQF appeal • Appoints an OQF Appeal Committee Coordinator (OQFACC) • Arranges for the invoice for the OQF appeal fee to be sent from the OAAAQA Financial Affairs Department to the Awarding Body 	Director General DGNQF
	4	The Awarding Body prepares the OQF Appeal Submission	Awarding Body
	5	The OQFACC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consults with the Director General DGNQF to prepare a longlist of four approved OQFERS • Submits longlist to the OAAAQA CEO for approval 	OAAAQA CEO Director General DGNQF OQFACC
	6	The Awarding Body sends the non-refundable OQF appeal fee to the OAAAQA Financial Affairs Department	Awarding Body

Table 2: Stages of the OQF Appeal Process				
Indicative Timetable	Task	Activity	Responsibility	
	7	The OAAAQA Financial Affairs Department acknowledges receipt of the OQF appeal fee to the Awarding Body and informs the OQFACC that the payment has been made	OAAAQA Financial Affairs Department	
	8	The OQFACC sends approved longlist of OQFERs to the Awarding Body to check for potential conflict of interest	OQFACC	
	9	Awarding Body reviews longlist of OQFERs and returns comments (if any) to the Director General DGNQF	Awarding Body	
	10	The OAAAQA CEO and the Director General DGNQF review comments (if any) from the Awarding Body (see 7) and agree the shortlisted OQFERs and the order by which substitutes are to be invited, if required (e.g., where selected shortlisted OQFERs are unavailable)	OAAAQA CEO Director General DGNQF	
	11	The Director General DGNQF invites the two shortlisted and approved OQFERs to form membership of an OQF Appeal Committee and sends an OQF Confidentiality Declaration Form (Appendix C1) with the request to respond within five working days	Director General DGNQF	
	12	OQFERs complete and return the OQF Confidentiality Declaration Form (Appendix C1) establishing the OQF Appeal Committee	OQF Appeal Committee Members	
	Within 60 calendar days of receipt of Final Report	13	The Awarding Body sends the OQF Appeal Submission to the Director General DGNQF	Awarding Body
		14	The OQFACC acknowledges receipt of the OQF Appeal Submission to the Awarding Body	OQFACC
		15	The OQFACC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In consultation with the OQF Appeal Committee members, drafts the plan of work for the OQF Appeal Committee for approval from the Director General DGNQF Informs the Awarding Body of the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership of the OQF Appeal Committee Key dates for the completion of the independent review Sends the OQF Appeal Submission Form against an OQF activity to the OQF Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Panel for a response 	OQFACC Director General DGNQF
		16	The OQFRD of the Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Panel collates the responses received from the OQFERs and, where appropriate, adds additional comment to the collated response	OQFRD
17		The OQFACC sends the following documentation to the OQF Appeal Committee members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OQF Appeal Submission Form from Awarding Body Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Application, as appropriate Awarding Body's comments on the First Draft of the Evaluation or Review Report 	OQFACC	

Table 2: Stages of the OQF Appeal Process

Indicative Timetable	Task	Activity	Responsibility
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved Final Evaluation or Review Report Response to the OQF Appeal Submission from the OQF Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Panel (see 15 and 16) 	
	18	Each OQF Appeal Committee member: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews the OQF documentation sent to them by the OQFACC (see 17) Prepares an initial OQF Appeal Report with a preliminary analysis of the OQF Appeal Submission Sends the initial OQF Appeal Report to the OQFACC 	OQF Appeal Committee
	19	The OQFACC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brings together the initial OQF Appeal Reports and the preliminary analyses (normally two) from the OQF Appeal Committee members to form the Draft OQF Appeal Report Sends the Draft OQF Appeal Report to the OQF Appeal Committee members for feedback Arranges a time for the OQF Appeal Committee to meet collectively (either in person or electronically) Prepares the venue and agenda for the OQF Appeal Committee meeting 	OQFACC
	20	The OQF Appeal Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets to review the Draft OQF Appeal Report, checking for accuracy and giving feedback, if any Reach a final OQF appeal decision (if possible) 	OQF Appeal Committee
	21	To reach a final decision on the OQF appeal, further OQF Appeal Committee meetings may be held (as necessary)	
	22	The OQFACC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafts the minutes of the Appeal Committee meeting(s) along with the OQF appeal decision Records the OQF appeal decision in the Draft OQF Appeal Report and makes amendments, as required, agreed by the OQF Appeal Committee members Sends the minutes and amended Draft OQF Appeal Report to the OQF Appeal Committee members for approval When approved the Draft OQF Appeal Report becomes the Final OQF Appeal Report 	OQFACC
	23	To indicate approval of the outcome of the OQF appeal, all OQF Committee members sign the Final OQF Appeal Report and return the signed copy to the OQFACC	OQF Appeal Committee

Table 2: Stages of the OQF Appeal Process

Indicative Timetable	Task	Activity	Responsibility
	24	The OQFACC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepares a covering letter, concerning the OQF appeal decision for the OAAAQA Board OAAAQA CEO, the Director General DGNQF and the Awarding Body • Submits draft covering letter to the OQF Appeal Committee for approval • Sends the Final OQF Appeal Report, which records the appeal decision, and the approved covering letter to the OAAAQA CEO and the Director General DGNQF 	OQFACC
Within 30 calendar days of OQF Appeal Submission	25	The OAAAQA CEO sends the OQF Appeal Report together with the covering letter, to the Awarding Body and the OAAAQA Board	OAAAQA CEO
	26	Where applicable the OQFACC amends the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report, as required, in accordance with the outcome of the OQF appeal decision	OQFACC
	27	The OAAAQA CEO receives the amended post-appeal Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report for approval	OAAAQA CEO
	28	The Director General DGQNF sends the approved post-appeal Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report to the Awarding Body	Director General of the DGNQF
	29	The DGNQF updates the NRQ	DGNQF
	30	The OQFACC prepares a feedback report concerning the conduct of the OQF appeal process	OQFACC

3. SUBJECT OF AN OQF APPEAL

3.1 Subject of an OQF Appeal Against a Listing or Alignment Evaluation

Awarding Bodies have the right to appeal where the Listing or Alignment Evaluation determined that the:

- The qualification does not meet the quality assurance measures set out in the OAAAQA Policy for the Quality Assurance of the OQF ⁹
- The internal quality assurance of the Foreign or International Awarding Body does not meet the requirements set out in the OAAAQA Policy for the Alignment of Foreign and International Qualifications to the OQF ¹⁰
- The qualification does not meet the Criteria for Listing or Alignment ¹¹
- The qualification does not meet the Awarding Body's proposal for the OQF Level (Level of Alignment) and/or the OQF Credit Value (comparable OQF Credit Value)
- The Omani programme does not meet the OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value requirements of the particular qualification type ¹²
- The condition placed on the qualification is perceived to be unjustified by the Awarding Body

3.2 Subject of Appeal against a Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review

Awarding Bodies have the right to appeal where the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review determined that the:

- Criteria for Listing or Alignment were not maintained during the delivery of the qualification¹³
- Criteria for Listing or Alignment were partially maintained and the condition placed on the qualification is perceived to be unjustified by the Awarding Body
- Changes made to existing modules, and/or modules removed or added to the programme impact on the OQF Level and/or the OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification, as applicable
- Changes made to an Omani qualification impacted on its qualification type

3.3 Not subject to an OQF Appeal

The Awarding Body must clearly state the reason for the OQF Appeal. An appeal cannot be raised against:

- The verified OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value of individual modules unless it affects the OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification and/or the qualification type
- Text in the Final Evaluation or Review Report that was not raised as a concern by the Awarding Body in their consideration of the First Draft of the applicable Report

⁹ OAAAQA, (2023), OQF Document, Appendix C4

¹⁰ OAAAQA, (2023) OQF Document, Appendix C3

¹¹ OAAAQA, (2023), OQF Document, Appendix C2 and C3

¹² OAAAQA, (2023) OQF Document, Section 7: Qualification Arrangements

¹³ OAAAQA, (2023) OQF Document, Appendix C5

4. GROUNDS FOR AN OQF APPEAL

4.1 Admissible Grounds for an OQF Appeal

The Awarding Body may raise an OQF appeal in the following circumstances:

- Significant factual inaccuracies and/or omissions raised on receipt of the First Draft of the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the First Draft of the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report were not corrected, despite providing evidence to the relevant OQF Panel
- The Listing or Alignment evaluation was conducted in a manner that did not comply with the relevant OAAAQA Policy for Listing or Alignment
- The Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review was conducted in a manner that did not comply with the OAAAQA Policy for Re-Listing and Re-Alignment of Qualifications on the OQF
- The perception is that the Listing or Alignment evaluation or the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review was carried out in a prejudicial manner that led to an outcome that the Awarding Body perceives as unfair
- The formal results are manifestly at odds with the respective commentary in the relevant Final Evaluation or Review Report
- The Listing or Alignment evaluation or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review process deviated from that set out in the OQF Manual in ways that were not agreed by both parties¹⁴

4.2 Non-admissible Grounds for an OQF Appeal

The following do not constitute grounds for an OQF appeal:

- Any matters not raised by the Awarding Body in feedback on the First Draft of the Evaluation or Review Report, as appropriate
- The Awarding Body failed to submit information requested by the relevant OQF Panel in a timely fashion during the Listing or Alignment evaluation or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review

4.3 Grounds for Rejection of an OQF Appeal

An OQF appeal may be rejected before reaching the OQF Appeal Committee in the following circumstances:

- The OQF Appeal Submission Form was submitted to the Director General of the DGNQF later than 60 calendar days from the date the Awarding Body received the Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or Final Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report (see section 2.2.2)
- The fee for the OQF appeal was not received by the OAAAQA
- The Awarding Body exerted undue influence on the OQF Appeal Committee and/or others (see section 11)

A Guidance Note for the submission of an OQF appeal is given in Appendix D.

¹⁴ OAAAQA (2023) OQF Manual

5. THE OQF APPEAL APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

Following receipt of the **Final** Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the **Final** Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report, an Awarding Body intending to raise an OQF appeal submits the OQF Appeal Application Form to the Director General of the DGNQF. As the OQF Appeal Application Form indicates an Awarding Body's intention to raise an OQF appeal, it is respectfully requested that this is sent to the DGNQF as soon as possible, preferably within ten days of receipt of the Final Evaluation or Review Report. On receipt of the OQF Appeal Application Form, the Director General of the DGNQF appoints an OQF Appeal Committee Coordinator (OQFACC) to manage the administration of the OQF appeal process.

As per national legal requirements, an OQF appeal submission must be raised within **60 calendar days** from the date the Awarding Body received the relevant Final Evaluation or Review Report. An OQF Appeal Submission Form received after 60 calendar days is rejected. These dates are confirmed in the covering letter that accompanies the relevant Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or Final Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report sent to the Awarding Body by the Director General of the DGNQF.

5.1 The OQF Appeal Application Form

The OQF Appeal Application Form:

- Should be sent to the Director General of the DGNQF as soon as possible following receipt of the relevant Final Evaluation or Review Report, preferably within ten working days
- Must be signed by the authorised representative from the Awarding Body and have the official Awarding Body Stamp
- Is acknowledged by the Director General of the DGNQF
- Triggers the issue of the invoice for the OQF appeal from the OAAAQA Financial Affairs Department

5.2 The OQF Appeal Submission Form

The Awarding Body completes the OQF Appeal Submission which must:

- Be received by the Director General of the DGNQF within 60 calendar days from the date the Awarding Body received the Final Evaluation or Review Report¹⁵
- Provide concise details of the exact nature of the claim that comprises the OQF appeal and the subject and grounds on which the OQF appeal is made
- Be accompanied by documentation that is relevant to, and in support of, the subject and grounds for the OQF appeal¹⁶
- Be signed by the authorised representative from the Awarding Body and have the official Awarding Body Stamp

5.2.1 Instructions for submitting the OQF Appeal Submission to the DGNQF

The OQF Appeal Submission Form is completed and submitted in the following manner:

- Five searchable electronic copies of the completed OQF Appeal Submission Form must be submitted to the Director General of the DGNQF:

¹⁵ An OQF Submission Form received by the Director General of the DGNQF after 60 calendar days is rejected

¹⁶ See Appendix D

- Four copies must be provided in PDF Format
- One copy must be in Microsoft Word Format
- All hyperlinks must be working

5.2.2 OQF Appeal Fee

The fee for an OQF appeal:

- Must be made before the OQF Appeal Submission Form is received by the DGNQF
- Is made to the OAAAQA Financial Affairs Department
- Is non-refundable

6. THE OQF APPEAL COMMITTEE

6.1 Purpose of the OQF Appeal Committee

The purpose of an OQF Appeal Committee is to provide assurance to the appellant Awarding Body that the Listing or Alignment evaluation of the qualification or the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review was carried out as stipulated in the relevant OAAAQA Policy regarding the OQF.

Where appropriate and depending on the nature of the OQF appeal, the OQF Appeal Committee may re-evaluate all or some of the modules comprising the qualification submitted for Listing or Alignment to provide further insight on the OQF Level and OQF Credit Value allocated by the OQF Listing or Alignment Panel that carried out the evaluation.

A Guidance Note for OQF Appeal Committee members is given in Appendix E.

6.2 Administration and Composition of the OQF Appeal Committee

6.2.1 OQF Appeal Committee Coordinator (OQFACC)

The OQFACC:

- Is appointed by the Director General of the DGNQF to ensure the smooth running of the OQF Appeal process¹⁷
- Must not have been involved in any way with the:
 - Listing or Alignment evaluation of the qualification under OQF appeal
 - Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review of the qualification under OQF appeal
- Manages the administration of the OQF appeal
- Ensures the OQF appeal complies with that set out in this OQF Appeals Manual

The OQFACC is not a member of the OQF Appeal Committee but has access to all relevant OQF Documentation.

To ensure that appropriate expertise is assigned to each OQF appeal, the OQFACC, in consultation with the Director General of the DGNQF:

- Develops a longlist of potential nominees for the formation of an OQF Appeal Committee (see Table 2). Four OQFERS are longlisted, drawn from approved and trained OQFERS, excluding those who were involved in any way in the original evaluation or review¹⁸
- The longlist of potential OQF Appeal Committee members is submitted to the OAAAQA CEO for approval

¹⁷ The OQFACC is normally a OAAAQA staff member but, if required, may be an external appointment in which case the OQFACC must sign the Confidentiality Declaration

¹⁸ Listing or Alignment Evaluation or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review

- The QQFACC informs the Awarding Body of the longlist of nominated QQFERs and requests the Awarding Body to identify any potential conflict of interest with the proposed nominees
- The response from the Awarding Body is considered by the OAAAQA CEO and the Director General of the DGNQF. A shortlist of two approved QQFERs is agreed as potential membership of the QQF Appeal Committee
- The two shortlisted QQFERs are invited to form an QQF Appeal Committee with the request to sign the QQF Confidentiality Declaration Form (Appendix C1) and return it within five working days to the QQFACC

6.2.2 Consultation with the Appellant Awarding Body

The QQFACC sends the approved longlist of nominations, in confidence, to the petitioning Awarding Body's most senior representative who is invited to comment on whether there is a potential conflict of interest with any of the nominees (the only grounds for objection).

The OAAAQA CEO and Director General of the DGNQF carefully consider all comments or objections from the Awarding Body but are not obliged to agree with any objection (other than those given in section 9). Once the members of the QQF Appeal Committee are confirmed, the names are sent to the Awarding Body by the QQFACC.

6.2.3 QQF Appeal Committee Member Confidentiality Declaration

Before being confirmed as a member of an QQF Appeal Committee, shortlisted QQFERs must complete, sign and return the QQF Confidentiality Declaration Form to the Director General of the DGNQF (see Appendix C1).

If the nominee has any concerns about a possible conflict of interest, they must contact the Director General of the DGNQF to discuss the matter further (see section 11). An established conflict of interest results in the withdrawal of the invitation to participate in the QQF Appeal Committee.

6.2.4 Director General of the DGNQF

The Director General of the DGNQF is not a member of the QQF Appeal Committee but may attend meetings as an Observer in an advisory capacity to ensure that all relevant QQF processes are carried out in compliance with relevant QQF Policies. While the Awarding Body may not be notified of their attendance, the Director General must not influence the decision of the QQF Appeal Committee under any circumstance.

7. QQF APPEAL COMMITTEE PROCESS AND DELIBERATIONS

7.1 QQF Appeal Committee Process

The QQF Appeal Committee process is as follows:

- The QQF Appeal Submission Form and supporting materials are circulated to the QQF Appeal Committee members
- Each QQF Appeal Committee member independently reviews the QQF Appeal Submission Form and supporting materials
- Where required, each QQF Appeal Committee member independently evaluates some or all of the modules that comprise the qualification as directed by the QQFACC
- Each QQF Appeal Committee member prepares an initial QQF Appeal Report with a preliminary analysis of the QQF appeal submission and sends this to the QQFACC within the agreed timescale

- The QQFACC brings together the initial QQF Appeal Reports (normally two) with the preliminary analyses from the QQF Appeal Committee members to form the Draft QQF Appeal Report
- The QQFACC sends the Draft QQF Appeal Report to the QQF Appeal Committee members and arranges a date and time for the Committee to meet collectively, either face-to-face or electronically
- The QQF Appeal Committee meets at the appointed time to review the Draft QQF Appeal Report, checking the Report for accuracy, providing feedback and, if possible, reaching a final QQF appeal decision
- If the QQF Appeal Committee is not able to reach an QQF appeal decision during the meeting, the QQF Appeal Committee may request the QQFACC to obtain further information and/or clarification, as required, from the petitioning Awarding Body, the QQF Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Panel that carried out the evaluation or review, and/or relevant DGNQF staff
- The QQF Appeal Committee may consult the Director General of the DGNQF on the technicalities of the relevant QQF process but under no circumstance must the Director General or the QQFACC be invited to give an opinion on the QQF appeal, nor must they give their opinion voluntarily
- The QQF Appeal Committee may request that the QQFACC arranges other QQF Appeal Committee meetings, as required
- Evidence in support of the QQF appeal cannot be accepted by the QQF Appeal Committee unless the Awarding Body can demonstrate that the evidence was submitted with the Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Application
- The QQF Appeal Committee meets in private. The petitioning Awarding Body is not entitled to have representation at QQF Appeal Committee meetings
- The minutes of QQF Appeal Committee meetings are prepared by the QQFACC and sent to the QQF Appeal Committee members for approval
- The QQFACC documents the agreed QQF appeal decision in the Draft QQF Appeal Report and, if required, makes amendments to the Draft Report as agreed by the QQF Appeal Committee
- The amended Draft QQF Appeal Report is sent to QQF Appeal Committee members for approval as the Final QQF Appeal Report
- The QQF Appeal Committee members sign the Final QQF Appeal Report indicating their agreement with the QQF appeal decision
- The QQFACC prepares a covering letter regarding the QQF appeal decision, which is sent with the Final QQF Appeal Report to the OAAAQA CEO and the Director General of the DGNQF
- The OAAAQA CEO sends the QQF Appeal Report and covering letter to the Awarding Body and the OAAAQA Board for information
- The QQFACC amends the Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report, as applicable
- The DGNQF updates the NRQ in accordance with the outcome of the QQF appeal decision, as applicable,
- The amended post-appeal Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report is submitted to the OAAAQA CEO for approval
- The Director General of the DGNQF sends the approved post-appeal Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report to the Awarding Body

- The QQFACC prepares a feedback report concerning the conduct of the QQF appeal process

7.1.1 Response to the QQF Appeal Submission

The QQF Appeal Committee may request the QQFACC contacts and/or arranges a meeting with the QQF Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Panel that conducted the original evaluation or review and/or relevant DGNQF staff for a response to the claims made in the QQF Appeal Submission.

Meetings may be face-to-face or conducted electronically, as required. The response from the relevant QQF Panel and/or the DGNQF staff may be written or verbal. Verbal responses are documented by the QQFACC and approved by the respondent.

The QQFACC collates the responses and the collated responses form part of the QQF appeal documentation sent to the QQF Appeal Committee as background information to assist in the deliberations.

7.2 QQF Appeal Committee Decision

The QQF Appeal Committee makes the final QQF appeal decision. The QQFACC amends the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report in accordance with the QQF appeal decision. The DGNQF updates the NRQ, as appropriate (see Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3: Action following QQF Appeal Decision for Listing or Alignment		
Listing or Alignment Outcome	QQF Appeal Committee Decision	Action
Listing or Alignment Outcome is: Not approved for Listing or Alignment	QQF Appeal Committee decision does not agree with the outcome: Qualification approved for Listing or Alignment	Qualification is placed on the NRQ
Listing or Alignment Outcome is: Not approved for Listing or Alignment	QQF Appeal Committee decision agrees with the outcome. Qualification is not approved for Listing or Alignment	Qualification is not placed on the NRQ
Listing or Alignment Outcome is: Approved for Listing or Alignment with Condition	QQF Appeal Committee decision does not agree with the outcome: Remove condition Qualification approved for Listing or Alignment	Qualification is placed on the NRQ
Listing or Alignment Outcome is: Approved for Listing or Alignment with Condition	QQF Appeal Committee decision agrees with the outcome. Do not remove condition Qualification approved for Listing or Alignment with Condition	Qualification is not placed on the NRQ until the condition is addressed within agreed timescale

Table 4: Action following OQF Appeal Decision for Re-Listing or Re-Alignment				
Re-Listing Outcome	or	Re-Alignment	OQF Appeal Committee Decision	Action
Re-Listing Outcome is: Not approved for Re-Listing or Re-Alignment	or	Re-Alignment	OQF Appeal Committee decision does not agree with the outcome: Qualification approved for Re-Listing or Re-Alignment	Qualification remains on the NRQ
Re-Listing Outcome is: Not approved for Re-Listing or Re-Alignment	or	Re-Alignment	OQF Appeal Committee decision agrees with the outcome. Qualification is not approved for Re-Listing or Re-Alignment	With approval from OAAAQA Board, the qualification is removed from the NRQ
Re-Listing Outcome is: Approved for Re-Listing or Re-Alignment with Condition	or	Re-Alignment	OQF Appeal Committee decision does not agree with the outcome: Remove condition and qualification approved for Re-Listing or Re-Alignment	Qualification remains on the NRQ
Re-Listing Outcome is: Approved for Re-Listing or Re-Alignment with Condition	or	Re-Alignment	OQF Appeal Committee decision agrees with the outcome. Do not remove condition Qualification approved for Re-Listing or Re-Alignment with Condition	Qualification remains on the NRQ The outcome `Re-Listed or Re-Aligned with Condition` is entered on the NRQ along with the agreed timeframe for addressing the condition (see note below)

Note: The condition placed on the qualification must be addressed by the Awarding Body within a timeframe agreed between the Awarding Body and the Director General of the DGNQF. If the condition is not addressed within the agreed timeframe, with approval from the OAAAQA Board, the qualification is removed from the NRQ.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE OQF APPEAL PROCESS

8.1 Responsibilities of the OAAAQA Board

The OAAAQA Board:

- Receives the Final OQF Appeal Report, which records the OQF appeal decision, and the approved covering letter from the OQF Appeal Committee, for information
- Receives the amended post-appeal Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report, for information
- Approves the OQF Appeals Manual and any subsequent updates on it

8.2 Responsibilities of the OAAAQA CEO

The OAAAQA CEO:

- Considers for approval the longlist of nominees for the OQF Appeal Committee, prepared by the Director General of the DGNQF and the OQFACC ¹⁹

¹⁹ Nominees are drawn from the National Register of approved OQFERs that have been trained in the OQF processes for Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing and Re-Alignment

- In collaboration with the Director General of the DGNQF, reviews comments (if any) from the Awarding Body on the longlist of nominees for the OQF Appeal Committee
- Approves two shortlisted OQFERs and order that substitutes are invited, if required. (e.g., if a shortlisted OQFER is unavailable)
- Receives the Final OQF Appeal Report, which records the OQF appeal decision, and the approved covering letter from the OQF Appeal Committee
- Informs the Awarding Body of the OQF appeal decision and sends the Final OQF Appeal Report and covering letter to the Awarding Body
- Receives the amended post-appeal Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report from the OQFACC, for approval

8.3 Responsibilities of the Director General of the DGNQF

The Director General of the DGNQF:

- Sends the Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or Final Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report to the Awarding Body, informing the Awarding Body of the right to raise an OQF appeal against the Final Report and/or the outcome
- Receives the OQF Appeal Application Form from the appellant Awarding Body and acknowledges receipt
- Informs the OAAAQA CEO of an impending OQF appeal
- Appoints an OQFACC
- Requests the OAAAQA Financial Affairs Department to raise an invoice for the OQF appeal fee and sends to the OAAAQA CEO for approval
- Coordinates with the OQFACC in the formation of a longlist of approved OQFERs and submits these to the OAAAQA CEO for approval
- Collaborates with the OAAAQA CEO to review comments from the Awarding Body on the longlist of nominees for the OQF Appeal Committee
- Invites the approved shortlist of nominees to form an OQF Appeal Committee and receives the completed Confidentiality Declarations from nominees
- Receives the completed OQF Appeal Submission Form and supporting materials from the appellant Awarding Body and acknowledges receipt
- Approves the plan of work and timescales for the OQF appeal, prepared by the OQFACC
- Attends OQF Appeal Committee meetings, as an observer in an advisory capacity, where required, to ensure that all relevant OQF processes are carried out in compliance with relevant OAAAQA Policies regarding the OQF
- Receives the Final OQF Appeal Report, which records the OQF appeal decision, and the approved covering letter from the OQF Appeal Committee
- Supports the OQFACC:
 - To amend the Final Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Report in accordance with the OQF appeal decision for submission to the OAAAQA CEO
 - Prepare OQF appeal documentation for the OAAAQA Board
- Ensures the NRQ is updated in accordance with the OQF appeal decision
- Sends the approved post-appeal Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report, as appropriate, to the Awarding Body

8.4 Responsibilities of the OQF Appeal Committee Coordinator (OQFACC)

The OQFACC:

- Ensures the provision of effective and efficient administrative support for the OQF appeal process
- Is the point of communication with, and between, the following, the:
 - Awarding Body
 - OQF Appeal Committee members
 - OQF Panel members, comprising the OQFERs and the OQFRD that carried out the Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment evaluation or review
 - Director General of the DGNQF
- Liaises, as necessary, with the petitioning Awarding Body on administrative matters pertaining to the OQF appeal
- Coordinates with the Director General of the DGNQF to prepare a longlist of four OQFERs for potential nomination to the OQF Appeal Committee for approval from the OAAAQA CEO
- Sends the approved longlist of nominees to the petitioning Awarding Body and receives the response
- Prepares the documentation required for the OAAAQA CEO and the Director General of the DGNQF to shortlist the nominees for the OQF Appeal Committee
- Sends the OQF Confidentiality Declaration Forms to the approved nominees for the OQF Appeal Committee
- Informs the Awarding Body of the approved OQF Appeal Committee members
- In collaboration with the OQF Appeal Committee, drafts the OQF appeal plan of work together with indicative timescale and submits for approval to the Director General of the DGNQF
- Sends the OQF Appeal Submission and all relevant documentation to the OQF Appeal Committee members for their independent preliminary analysis within the agreed deadline
- Receives the initial OQF Appeal Reports (normally two) with the preliminary analyses and brings them together to form a draft OQF Appeal Report (one Report)
- Sends the draft OQF Appeal Report to the OQF Appeal Committee members for feedback
- Prepares for an OQF Appeal Committee meeting, either face to face or electronically, to finalise the OQF Appeal Report and reach an OQF appeal decision
- Chairs the OQF Appeal Committee meeting, notes amendments to the draft OQF Appeal Report and the OQF appeal decision, if any
- Arranges additional OQF Appeal Committee meetings, as required
- Drafts the minute of the OQF Appeal Committee meeting and sends these to the OQF Appeal Committee for approval
- Records the OQF appeal decision in the Draft OQF Appeal Report and, if required, amends the Draft Report as agreed by the OQF Appeal Committee members
- Sends the Draft OQF Appeal Report to the OQF Appeal Committee for approval to form the Final OQF Appeal Report
- Prepares a covering letter from the OQF Appeal Committee regarding the approved OQF appeal decision and sends to the OAAAQA CEO and the Director General of the DGNQF
- Amends the Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Report in accordance with the OQF appeal decision, as appropriate and sends to the OAAAQA CEO for approval
- Prepares a feedback report on the conduct of the OQF appeal process for the Director General of the DGNQF

8.5 Responsibilities OQF Appeal Committee

OQF Appeal Committee:

- Completes and returns the OQF Confidentiality Declaration Form to the Director General of the DGNQF within the agreed timescale and maintains confidentiality throughout the OQF appeal process and any time thereafter
- Receives the OQF appeal documentation and independently carries out a preliminary analysis of the OQF Appeal Submission
- Communicates with the OQFACC on matters requiring clarification, so that appropriate action can be taken
- Where required, evaluates modules for Listing or Alignment to determine the OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification
- Evaluates submitted documentation for Re-Listing or Re-Alignment to determine whether the Awarding Body maintained the OQF quality assurance measures throughout the delivery of the Listed or Aligned qualification ²⁰
- Completes an initial OQF Appeal Report with the preliminary analysis of the OQF Appeal Submission and sends it to the OQFACC
- Participates in OQF Appeal Committee meetings, as required, to review the draft OQF Appeal Report and reach a final decision on the outcome of the OQF appeal
- Provides feedback to the OQFACC on the amended Draft of the OQF Appeal Report and minutes of the OQF Appeal Committee meetings
- Approves the minutes of the OQF Appeal Committee meeting(s) and the covering letter with the OQF appeal decision for the OAAAQA Board, the Director General of the DGNQF and subsequently the Awarding Body

9. COMMUNICATION

All communication, including questions on the OQF appeal, must be directed through the OQFACC. The petitioning Awarding Body must not communicate directly with any member of the OQF Appeal Committee. OQF Appeal Committee members must not make direct contact with the:

- The appellant Awarding Body
- The OQF Panel that carried out the Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment for the qualification under OQF appeal
- DGNQF staff

All communication between the Awarding Body and the OQF Appeal Committee members must be made through the Awarding Body's nominated contact person and the OQFACC, otherwise the OQF appeal will be terminated immediately.

10. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

OQFERs invited to participate in an OQF Appeal Committee must declare any potential conflict of interest at the outset. A conflict of interest may be personal or professional. Where it is established that a conflict of interest exists, the OQFER is withdrawn from the OQF Appeal Committee immediately and without payment.

²⁰ OAAAQA (2023), OQF Document, Appendix C4: OAAAQA Policy on the Quality Assurance of the OQF

10.1 Personal Conflict of Interest

A personal conflict of interest arises where the OQF Appeal Committee member has:

- An immediate family member or close friend that is on the Governing Body or staff of the petitioning Awarding Body
- An immediate family member close friend of any member of the OQF Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Panel that was involved in the evaluation or review of the qualification under OQF appeal
- Any animosity with a person on the Governing Body or staff of the Awarding Body that owns the qualification
- A financial interest in the Awarding Body that owns or delivers the qualification
- Any bias towards or against the Awarding Body that owns or delivers the qualification due to previous circumstances (e.g., being a graduate of the Awarding Body)

10.2 Professional Conflict of Interest

A professional conflict of interest arises if the OQF Appeal Committee member:

- Was involved in the design of the qualification under appeal
- Was involved in the OQF Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Panel for the qualification under appeal
- Is currently, or has been within the past two years, involved in the delivery, management or administration of the qualification or any of the modules comprising the qualification
- Is currently an applicant or candidate for a position with the Awarding Body
- Is currently employed, or has been employed, by the Awarding Body within the past two years
- Is currently engaged by the Awarding Body to provide consultancy or other professional services or has been engaged to provide such services within the past two years

11. UNDUE INFLUENCE

It is not permissible for the petitioning Awarding Body to exert undue influence on the:

- OQF Appeal Committee members
- Director General of the DGNQF or any member of DGNQF staff
- OQFACC
- OAAAQA CEO
- OAAAQA Board members
- OAAAQA staff members

Undue influence by the petitioning Awarding Body (or stakeholders of the Awarding Body) may take a number of forms, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Communication about the OQF appeal to any of the above (except as a formal part of the OQF appeal process)
- Explicit or implied threats to any of the above
- Explicit or implied promises of benefits to any of the above
- Gifts to any of the above

In the event of undue influence occurring, the OQF appeal process is automatically cancelled and the OQF outcome remains unchanged and this is reflected in the Final OQF Appeal Report submitted to the OAAAQA Board for information.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY

OQF Appeal Submissions are treated with the strictest of confidence. Before serving on an OQF Appeal Committee, nominees must sign the OQF Confidentiality Declaration Form. Discussion of the OQF appeal must only be with others involved in the process. OQFACC and OQF Appeal Committee members must not discuss the OQF appeal with others e.g., colleagues within the OQF Appeal Committee member's institution. DGNQF staff must limit discussion on the OQF appeal to that required by the formal OQF appeal process.

An OQFACC or OQF Appeal Committee member found to break the terms of the OQF Confidentiality Declaration is immediately removed from the OQF Appeal Committee and does not receive payment for any time they may have served on it. They may, with approval of the OAAAQA CEO, also be removed from the National Register of External Reviewers.

13. COST OF OQF APPEALS

There will be a cost for the OQF appeal process. Fees for activities associated with Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing and Re-Alignment Appeals will be determined in accordance with the OAAAQA Policy on Fees Charged for OQF Activities and Appeals²¹ prior to submission to the Ministry of Finance for approval. When approved, the details will be published on the OAAAQA Website and in the official Gazette.

14. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on the OQF appeal process is available from the DGNQF. Awarding Bodies may contact the DGNQF by email on (OQF@oaaaqa.gov.om) or by telephone (696). Alternatively, refer to the frequently asked questions given in this manual (see Appendix F).

²¹ To be developed

PART C: APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: REFERENCES

OAAAQA Appeals Manual at <https://oaaaqa.gov.om/Oman-Qualifications-Framework/The-OQF-Manual>

Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA), 'OAAAQA Policy on Fees Charged for OAAAQA External Quality Assurance Activities and Appeals', [online], available at: <https://oaaaqa.gov.om/About-the-OAAA/OAAA-Policies>

Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA) (2023) OQF Document

OAAAQA Policy for the Governance, Management and Implementation of the OQF

OAAAQA Policy for Listing Qualifications on the OQF

OAAAQA for the Alignment of Foreign and International qualifications to the OQF

OAAAQA Policy for the Quality Assurance of the OQF

OAAAQA Policy for Re-Listing and Re-Alignment of Qualifications on the OQF

APPENDIX B: ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following acronyms and terms are used in this OQF Appeals Manual. See the OAAAQA Glossary for definitions of specific terms.²²

Table B1: Acronyms	
Term	Definition
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DGNQF	Directorate General of the National Qualifications Framework
HEI	Higher Education Institution
OAAAQA	Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education
OQF	Oman Qualifications Framework
OQFACC	Oman Qualifications Framework Appeal Committee Coordinator
OQFER	Oman Qualifications Framework External Reviewer

Table B2: Glossary of Terms	
Term	Definition
Alignment [of a qualification to the OQF]	An evaluation of a Foreign or International qualification against the Alignment Criteria and the OQF Level Descriptors to determine the OQF Level that the qualification aligns to and, if applicable, the comparable OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification
Appellant	The Awarding Body lodging an appeal
Awarding Body	An organisation that issues education or training awards following formal assessment (for example, Academic Higher Education Institutions and their Affiliates, Technological Institutions, Professional Bodies and Technical and Vocational Education and Training Providers) ²³
Evaluation [of Listing or Alignment]	A systematic method of examination of each module comprising a qualification to determine the extent to which the entire qualification meets the criteria as set out in the relevant OAAAQA Policy together with the qualification's OQF Level and OQF Credit Value
Foreign and International Qualifications	Foreign qualifications relate to qualifications awarded in a country other than Oman (for example, a United Kingdom Awarding Body). International qualifications relate to qualifications awarded by an International Awarding Body (for example, Cisco and Microsoft)
Governance [of the OQF]	The overall responsibility for the OQF; including setting the strategic direction and approving the overarching policies for the framework
Implementation [of the OQF]	Carrying out all OQF activities, including the processes for Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing and Re-Alignment; promoting and disseminating the OQF to stakeholders; supporting all Awarding Bodies offering qualifications in Oman, and maintaining the National Register of Qualifications
Level Descriptors [of the OQF]	A set of progressive statements, which describe the expected outcomes at each level of the OQF in regard to the six characteristics of Knowledge; Skills; Communication, Numeracy, Information Communication Technology Skills; Autonomy and Responsibility; Employability and Values; and Learning to Learn

²² <http://www.oaaqa.gov.om/Training.aspx#Glossary>

²³ Adapted from <http://qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/#a>.

Table B2: Glossary of Terms	
Term	Definition
Listing [a qualification on the OQF]	An evaluation of an Omani qualification against the Listing Criteria and the OQF Level Descriptors to determine the OQF Level and OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification
Major Change	A change that affects the OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value of the qualification or impacts on the qualification meeting the Listing or Alignment Criteria and subsequently its placement on the National Register of Qualifications
Management [of the OQF]	Ensuring all OQF activities are carried out effectively and efficiently following the OAAAQA Policies relating to the Oman Qualifications Framework
Mandatory Qualifications Framework	A National Qualifications Framework that must be put into operation by all Awarding Bodies
Module	A component of a qualification. Also known as course or unit by some Awarding Bodies
Most Senior Representative	Generally, the Vice-Chancellor of a university or Dean of a college (or those authorised on their behalf if unavailable)
National Register of Qualifications [NRQ]	An online official record of all nationally recognised qualifications Listed on, or Aligned to, the OQF. Managed by the DGNQF, the NRQ is available to stakeholders and the general public. Submission and evaluation of Listing and Alignment applications are carried out through the NRQ online system, allowing for secure storage and easy retrieval of documentation
Oman Qualifications Framework [OQF]	An instrument to describe, compare and classify qualifications from all sectors of education and training in Oman. It is based on one set of generic Level Descriptors, which describe the expected outcomes at each of its ten levels. The OQF provides a reference point for qualifications delivered and awarded in Oman; the comparison between Omani qualifications and Foreign or International qualifications; and the Recognition of Prior Learning
OQF Appeal Application	A Form completed by the Awarding Body indicating the name of the appealing Awarding Body, the OQF process under appeal and the Appellant's contact details
OQF Appeal Submission	A Form that concisely explains the exact nature and details of all of the claims that comprise the OQF appeal
OQF Credit Value	The number of OQF Credit Points or OQF Credit Hours, which are allocated to units, modules, courses and qualifications for learning that is verified through reliable and valid assessment
OQF Level	An indicator of relative demand, complexity, depth of knowledge and learner autonomy as described in the OQF Level Descriptors ²⁴
Placement [of a qualification on the NRQ]	The inclusion of a qualification on the National Register of Qualifications following the nine-stage Listing or Alignment process, which includes a Proposal, Recommendation, Verification and Approval of the OQF Level and OQF Credit Value of the qualification
Qualification	An award issued by an Awarding Body when, following established standards, the Awarding Body determines that the learner has achieved the Learning Outcomes of all the units, modules or courses of the programme
Qualification Arrangements	The requirements for each qualification type in terms of their title, structure, purpose, admission requirements and progression opportunities

²⁴ Adapted from D Gosling and J Moon, *How to Use Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria* (London: Southern England Consortium for Credit Accumulation and Transfer, SEEC Office, 2001).

Table B2: Glossary of Terms	
Term	Definition
Qualification Type	A classification of the range of qualifications delivered by all education and training sectors in Oman including school, academic, technological, professional and technical and vocational qualifications
Quality	The extent to which an educational institution's systems, processes and structures result in outcomes for the institution and/or its programmes, which meet stakeholder needs through the attainment of relevant standards/benchmarks ²⁵
Quality Assurance	The implementation of planned and systematic processes and systems, either internal or external and independent to an educational institution, that assess the institution's programmes, services and activities as well as the processes that support these, in relation to relevant standards/benchmarks/frameworks ²⁶
Recognition of Prior Learning	The process of assessing a learner's application for OQF Credit on the grounds of learning that was previously acquired through formal, informal and/or non-formal learning
Re-Listing or Re-Alignment	A review process for Listed and Aligned qualifications to ensure that the Listing or Alignment Criteria were maintained throughout the delivery of the qualification and no major changes were made to the Learning Outcomes of the units, modules or courses that impacted on the QF Level and/or OQF Credit Value of the qualification
Verification [of Listing or Alignment]	An objective moderation of a Listing or Alignment application and its associated Evaluation Report to check that the Listing or Alignment process was carried out correctly and is consistent across different OQF External Reviewers, thus ensuring the qualification (and modules) meet the Listing or Alignment Criteria and the outcomes of the relevant OQF Level Descriptors

²⁵ See OAAAQA Online Glossary, www.aaaqa.gov.om/Training.aspx#Glossary (accessed on 19.04.2021).

²⁶ Adapted from OAAAQA Online Glossary, www.aaaqa.gov.om/Training.aspx#Glossary (accessed on 19.04.2021).

APPENDIX C: FORMS RELATING TO OQF APPEALS

Appendix C1: OQF Confidentiality Declaration

OQF Confidentiality Declaration			
OQF Appeal Committee Member Details			
Full Name		[Please enter full name and title of OQF Appeal Committee member here]	
Petitioning Awarding Body			
Name of the Petitioning Awarding Body		[Please enter name of petitioning Awarding Body here]	
	Please tick (✓) the appropriate column for each of the following statements:	Agree	Disagre²⁷
1	I have read and understood the relevant sections of the OAAAQA Appeals Manual (Sections A and C) and will carry out the tasks and responsibilities as described		
2	I understand the importance of the indicative timelines and/or deadlines agreed upon with the OQF Appeal Committee Coordinator (OQFACC) and agree to abide by them where this lies within my control or will seek permission from the OQFACC if an extension is required		
3	I know of no conflict of interest, as set out in the relevant section of the OAAAQA Appeals Manual that would jeopardise my participation in this OQF Appeal Committee		
4	I have previously provided, or have submitted with this form, accurate and current biographical information and consent to this being edited and published on the OAAAQA website and otherwise used by the DGNQF for this OQF appeal		
5	During the contract period and at any time thereafter, I will not breach the confidentiality of any information in relation to this OQF appeal. This includes information received in written form (for example, the Awarding Body's OQF Appeal Submission and supporting materials)		
6	During the contract period and at any time thereafter, I will not divulge any information shared during the OQF appeal		
7	I will not delegate work to another person e.g., asking another to download supporting materials, or asking for opinion from another). I fully understand that the delegation of work to any person is not approved by the OAAAQA Board and constitutes a serious breach of confidentiality		
8	I will complete any evaluation survey and/or end-of-activity report required by the DGNQF to inform the continuous improvement of the OQF appeal process		
OQF Appeal Committee Member Confidentiality Declaration			
I acknowledge that I have read and accepted all the terms of this declaration.			
OQF Appeal Committee Member Signature			

²⁷ If you indicate disagreement with any of the statements in the declaration above, the DGNQF will be in touch with you to discuss the matter further.

Appendix C2: OQF Appeal Application Form



Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education OQF Appeal Application Form

Please read the OQF Appeals Manual before submitting an OQF Appeal.

The OQF Appeal Application Form is used to give notice to the Directorate General of the National Qualifications Framework (DGNQF) that an Awarding Body intends to submit an OQF appeal. An OQF appeal can only be raised after the Awarding Body has received the Final Report for Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment.

The Director General of the DGNQF respectfully requests that the Awarding Body submits the completed OQF Appeal Application Form as soon as possible following the receipt of the Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the Final Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report, preferably within ten working days, so that the preparations for the OQF appeal can begin. The completed OQF Appeal Application Form can be submitted by email to: (OQF@oaaqa.gov.om).

The OQF Appeal Submission Form **must** be completed and returned with relevant supporting materials to the Director General of the DGNQF **within 60 calendar days** of the Awarding Body receiving the Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or Final Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report. The OAAQA Financial Affairs Department sends the OQF Appeal Fee Invoice to the Awarding Body, which must be paid within 60 calendar days, preferably before the DGNQF receives the OQF Appeal Submission.

OQF Appeal Application Form			
Part A: Key Details			
Name of Awarding Body			
Full Qualification Title			
Type of evaluation or review being appealed against (e.g., Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment)			
Date (day, month and year) of receipt of the Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Final Report for the above qualification		[dd/mm/yyyy]	
Date of Submission of this OQF Appeal Application Form		[dd/mm/yyyy]	
Intended Date of Appeal Submission		[dd/mm/yyyy]	
Part B: Communication			
Provide the details of the contact person in the Awarding Body who may be approached by the DGNQF in relation to this OQF Appeal Application:			
Contact Person's Name		Email	
Designation		Telephone	
Part C: Subject of OQF Appeal			
This OQF appeal is against the:			Tick the reason for this OQF appeal: ✓
1	Listing or Alignment evaluation outcome for the Quality Assurance of the Programme		
2	Listing evaluation outcome of the Listing Criteria		
3	Alignment evaluation for the Internal Quality Assurance of the Foreign or International Awarding Body		
4	Alignment evaluation outcome of the Alignment Criteria		
5	Listing or Alignment evaluation outcome of the OQF Level (Level of Alignment) and/or the OQF Credit Value (comparable OQF Credit Value) of the qualification		
6	Listing evaluation outcome for the qualification type		
7	Listing or Alignment evaluation outcome for the condition placed on the qualification		
8	Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review on the maintenance of the Listing or Alignment Criteria, resulting in the outcome of Not Re-Listed or Not Re-Aligned)		
9	Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review outcome that the Listing or Alignment Criteria for were not fully maintained during the delivery of the qualification, resulting in the outcome of Re-Listed or Re-Aligned with Condition		

10	Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review on changes made to the programme resulting in a change to the OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value (Level of Alignment and/or comparable OQF Credit Value) of the entire qualification and/or qualification type (Re-Listing only)		
Part D: Authority			
This OQF Appeal Application Form is submitted for and on behalf of the Awarding Body by the Authorised Representative			
Representative's Title and Name		Signature	
Designation		Date	
Official Use Only: Directorate General of the National Qualifications Framework			
OQF Appeal Application Form Received by the DGNQF			[dd/mm/yyyy]

Appendix C3: OQF Appeal Submission Form



Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education OQF Appeal Submission Form

Please read the current OAAAQA Appeals Manual before submitting an OQF appeal.

This OQF Appeal Submission Form is used by an Awarding Body after having given notice to the Director General of the DGNQF of the Awarding Body's intention to raise an OQF appeal (by submitting the OQF Appeal Application Form).

The completed OQF Appeal Submission Form and supporting materials must be received by the Director General of the DGNQF within **60 calendar days** from the date the Awarding Body receives the Final Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Report. Completed submissions are emailed to the Director General of the DGNQF (OQF@oaaaqa.gov.om).

The non-returnable fee for an OQF appeal must also be paid within 60 calendar days and preferably before the DGNQF receives the OQF Appeal Submission. The fee for the OQF appeal is made to the OAAAQA Financial Affairs Department.

OQF Appeal Submission Form			
Part A: Key Details			
Name of Awarding Body			
Full Qualification Title			
Type of evaluation or review being appealed against (e.g., Listing or Alignment evaluation or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review)			
Date (day, month and year) of receipt of the Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report for the above qualification		[dd/mm/yyyy]	
Date of submission of the OQF Appeal Application Form		[dd/mm/yyyy]	
Part B: Communication			
Provide the details of the contact person in the Awarding Body who may be approached by the DGNQF in relation to this OQF Appeal Submission			
Contact Person's Name		Email	
Designation		Telephone	
Part C: Authority			
This OQF Appeal Submission Form is submitted for and on behalf of the Awarding Body by the Authorised Representative			
Representative's Name		Signature	
Designation		Date	
Part D Reason for OQF Appeal			
This OQF appeal is against the:		Provide the Final OQF Evaluation Outcome	
1	Listing or Alignment evaluation outcome for the Quality Assurance of the Programme		
2	Listing evaluation outcome of the Criteria for Listing		
3	Alignment evaluation for the Internal Quality Assurance of the Foreign or International Awarding Body		
4	Alignment evaluation outcome of the Criteria for Alignment		
5	Listing or Alignment evaluation outcome of the OQF Level (Level of Alignment) and/or the OQF Credit Value (comparable OQF Credit Value) of the qualification		
6	Listing evaluation outcome for the Qualification Type		
7	Listing or Alignment evaluation outcome for the Conditions placed on the qualification		
8	Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review on the maintenance of the Criteria for Listing or Alignment resulting in the outcome of Not Re-Listed or Not Re-Aligned)		

9	Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review that the Criteria for Listing or Alignment were not fully maintained during the delivery of the qualification resulting in the outcome of Re-Listed or Re-Aligned with conditions	
10	Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review on changes made to the programme resulting in a change to the OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value (Level of Alignment and/or comparable OQF Credit Value) of the entire qualification and/or Qualification Type (Re-Listing only)	
Part E: Grounds for Appeal		
Grounds for this OQF appeal		Tick the applicable grounds for the OQF appeal: ✓
1	Significant factual inaccuracies and/or omissions raised on receipt of the First Draft of the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the First Draft of the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report have not been corrected despite providing appropriate evidence to the DGNQF	
2	The Listing or Alignment evaluation was conducted in a manner that did not comply with either the OAAAQA Policy on Listing Qualifications on the OQF or the OAAAQA Policy for the Alignment of Foreign and International Qualifications on the OQF, whichever is applicable	
3	The Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review was conducted in a manner that did not comply with the OAAAQA Policy for Re-Listing and Re-Alignment of Qualifications on the OQF	
4	The perspective is that the Listing or Alignment evaluation or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review was carried out in a prejudicial manner that led to an outcome that the Awarding Body regards as unfair	
5	The formal outcomes are manifestly at odds with the respective commentary in the relevant Final Report	
6	The Listing or Alignment evaluation or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review process deviated from that set out in the OQF Manual in ways that were not agreed by both parties	
Part F: Explanation of OQF Appeal		
Explain the Reason(s) for this OQF Appeal		Supporting Material
Part G: OQF Appeal Fee		
Date the Non-Refundable fee for the OQF appeal was paid to the OAAAQA Financial Affairs Department		[dd/mm/yyyy]
Official Use Only: Directorate General of the National Qualifications Framework		
OQF Appeal Submission Form Received by the DGNQF		[dd/mm/yyyy]
Payment Confirmed by the OAAAQA Financial Affairs Department		[dd/mm/yyyy]

APPENDIX D: GUIDANCE NOTE FOR AN AWARDING BODY ON THE SUBMISSION OF AN OQF APPEAL

Aim of this Guidance Note

The aim of this Guidance Note is to assist an Awarding Body prepare a submission for an OQF appeal against the Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report and/or the outcomes or the Final Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report and/or the outcomes.

The OQF Appeal Committee

Each OQF appeal is conducted by an OQF Appeal Committee, approved by the OAAAQA Board and appointed by the Director General of the DGNQF. OQF Appeal Committee members are drawn from those who have had no involvement in the original Listing or Alignment evaluation or involved in the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review. To avoid any potential conflict of interest, Awarding Bodies are consulted before the OQF Appeal Committee membership is confirmed. An OQF Appeal Committee operates independently of the DGNQF.

The purpose of forming the OQF Appeal Committee is to provide external scrutiny to ensure that the OQF processes are conducted in compliance with the relevant OQF Policy and Procedures²⁸. To achieve this, the OQF Appeal Committee considers the Awarding Body's comments on the First Draft of the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the First Draft of the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report.

The OQF Appeal Committee decision is final and the DGNQF takes the necessary action, including making amendment to the Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report, the Final Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report and/or the NRQ, as appropriate.

Subject of an OQF Appeal

The OQF Appeals Manual contains the circumstances in which it is possible for an Awarding Body to lodge an OQF appeal against the Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report (see Sections 4 and 5). Awarding Bodies are advised to weigh up the requirements for a successful OQF Appeal Submission (Preparation of the Appeal Submission).

Features of OQF Processes

Awarding Bodies have the opportunity to raise concerns and provide comment on the First Draft of the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the First Draft of the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report. Comments may include factual inaccuracies and/or omission of aspects of the Awarding Body's operation e.g., their quality assurance measures in relation to the Criteria for Listing or Alignment.

The DGNQF provides support to Awarding Bodies to ensure that they understand the reason for the Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report outcome or the Final Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report outcome and to assist the Awarding Body to resubmit the relevant OQF Application.

Preparation of the OQF Appeal Submission

Before proceeding to compile an OQF Appeal Submission, Awarding Bodies should carefully review the OQF Appeals Manual. This is to ensure that the Awarding Body understands the

²⁸ OAAAQA (2023) OQF Document, Appendix C

subject and grounds of and OQF appeal (see sections 4 and 5) and the potential decisions open to the OQF Appeal Committee.

In the event an Awarding Body decides to proceed with lodging an OQF appeal, an OQF Appeal Application Form (Appendix C2), indicating the intention to raise an appeal, must be submitted to the Director General of the DGNQF following receipt of the relevant Final Report. This is followed by the OQF Appeal Submission Form which needs to be completed within the timelines set out in the OQF Appeals Manual.

Submission of the OQF Appeal Submission Form

The OQF Appeal Submission Form (Appendix C3) is submitted in soft copy to the Director General of the DGNQF. The submission must be brief, relevant, to the point and include relevant material that supports the reasons, subject and grounds for the OQF appeal. No new supporting material must be included in the OQF Appeal Submission. The OQF Appeal Submission must include:

- The reasons for the OQF appeal
- The subject of the OQF appeal
- The grounds on which the OQF appeal is being made, such as factual inaccuracies and/or omissions which the Awarding Body has already attempted to correct
- Explanation of the OQF appeal with relevant materials, previously submitted, that provide evidence to support the OQF Appeal Submission

The Subject of an OQF Appeal

Awarding Bodies cannot appeal the outcome of a Listing or Alignment evaluation against individual modules. The Listing or Alignment evaluation outcome for individual modules can only be reconsidered where the OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value of modules affect the OQF Level of the entire qualification.

Awarding Bodies may appeal against the:

- Listing or Alignment evaluation outcome for the quality assurance of the programme
- Listing evaluation outcome of the Criteria for Listing
- Alignment evaluation for the Internal Quality Assurance of the Foreign or International Awarding Body
- Alignment evaluation outcome of the Criteria for Alignment
- Listing or Alignment evaluation outcome of the OQF Level (Level of Alignment) and/or the OQF Credit Value (comparable OQF Credit Value) of the qualification
- Listing evaluation outcome for the Qualification Type
- Listing or Alignment evaluation outcome for the Conditions placed on the qualification
- Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review on the maintenance of the Criteria for Listing or Alignment resulting in the outcome of Not Re-Listed or Not Re-Aligned)
- Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review that the Criteria for Listing or Alignment were not fully maintained during the delivery of the qualification resulting in the outcome of Recommended for Re-Listing or Re-Alignment with conditions
- Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review on changes made to the programme resulting in a change to the OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value (Level of Alignment and/or comparable OQF Credit Value) of the entire qualification and/or Qualification Type (Re-Listing only)

The Grounds for an OQF Appeal

The Awarding Body must identify the grounds on which the OQF appeal is based. An OQF appeal may be made on one or more of the following grounds:

- Significant factual inaccuracies and/or omissions raised on the First Draft of the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the First Draft of the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report have not been corrected despite providing appropriate evidence to the DGNQF
- The Listing or Alignment evaluation was conducted in a manner that did not comply with either the OAAAQA Policy on Listing Qualifications on the OQF or the OAAAQA Policy for the Alignment of Foreign and International Qualifications on the OQF, whichever is applicable
- The Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review was conducted in a manner that did not comply with the OAAAQA Policy for Re-Listing and Re-Alignment of Qualifications on the OQF
- The perspective is that the Listing or Alignment evaluation or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review was carried out in a prejudicial manner that led to an outcome that the Awarding Body regards as unfair
- The formal outcomes are manifestly at odds with the respective commentary in the relevant Final Report
- The Listing or Alignment evaluation or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review process deviated from that set out in the OQF Manual in ways that were not agreed by both parties

Supporting Materials

The Awarding Body must consider the selection of materials to be submitted in support of the OQF appeal. Supporting materials must directly relate to the subject and grounds for the OQF appeal. The Awarding Body must not include any material that is not directly related or was not been previously submitted. The Awarding Body has nothing to be gained in resubmitting information that has already been provided in the relevant OQF Application, or before the approval of the Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the Final Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report, unless there is firm evidence that the evidence was misinterpreted or ignored by the OQF Listing or Alignment Panel and/or the DGNQF, as appropriate.

The explanation of the reasons for lodging an OQF appeal must be given accompanied with relevant supporting material to provide evidence of the explanation. An OQF appeal must not be based on assertions that are unsupported by evidence. The following types of argument are unhelpful in an OQF appeal:

- Critique of the Criteria for Listing or Alignment; OQF Level Descriptors; OQF policies and/or procedures; or OQF processes, (these are not up for debate in the context of an OQF appeal)
- Viewpoints that show the Awarding Body does not accept the OQF processes for Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment
- Suggestions that the judgements made by the OQF Listing or Alignment Panel or DGNQF (as relevant) are not legitimate, or suggestions that members of the OQF Listing or Alignment Panel and/or the DGNQF are insufficiently qualified to conduct the Listing or Alignment evaluation or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review
- Questioning, without evidence, the capacity and/or impartiality of one or more of the OQF Listing or Alignment Panel members that conducted the Listing or Alignment evaluation or the capacity and/or impartiality of the member of the DGNQF that conducted the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review
- Arguments that the existence of a plan to put in place the relevant Criteria, (with or without an allocation of resources) is a sufficient basis of meeting the OQF requirements for Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment

- Seeking to change the text, including the tone of the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report

As the OQF Appeal Committee meets in private, clarity and careful presentation of relevant evidence in the OQF Appeal Submission are essential. It must be structured so that the OQF Appeal Committee members can understand the subject and grounds of the OQF appeal, with the submitted supporting material cross referenced to the points made in PART 3 of the OQF Appeal Submission Form to provide clear directions for the OQF Appeal Committee to locate the specific data or evidence. All hyperlinks must be working and easily accessible.

APPENDIX E: GUIDANCE NOTE FOR OQF APPEAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Aim of this Guidance Note

The aim of this Guidance Note is to assist OQF Appeal Committee members carry out their responsibilities in considering an OQF appeal submitted by an Awarding Body against the Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report and/or outcome or the Final Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report and/or outcome

The OQF Appeal Committee

The purpose of forming an OQF Appeal Committee is to provide further external scrutiny of the outcome of a Listing or Alignment evaluation or a Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review in cases where an Awarding Body raises an OQF appeal against the relevant Final Report and/or outcome.

If an Awarding Body has any concerns with the Final Draft of the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report and/or outcome or the Final Draft of the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report and/or outcome it may provide comment and/or questions to the DGNQF. The DGNQF will correct any inaccuracies in the relevant Final Draft Report and support the Awarding Body to address any issues that may have influenced the outcome.

If the concerns raised cannot be resolved, the Awarding Body may raise an OQF appeal by submitting the OQF Appeal Application Form to the DGNQF, preferably within ten days of receiving the Final Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Report to enable the commencement of the appeal administration arrangements by the Director General (see section 2.2.2).

On receipt of the OQF Appeal Application Form, the Director General of the DGNQF appoints an OQF Appeal Committee Co-ordinator²⁹ (OQFACC) and OQF External Reviewers (OQFERs), as required³⁰ from the National Register of External Reviewers to form an OQF Appeal Committee to provide additional external scrutiny to ensure that the Listing or Alignment evaluation or the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review was conducted as per the relevant OAAAQA Policy and Procedures in the OQF Document. The OQFACC and the OQFERs must have had no involvement in the original Listing or Alignment evaluation or the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review.

Awarding Bodies are consulted on the potential membership of the OQF Appeal Committee before the membership is confirmed by the DGNQF.

²⁹ Normally from the DGNQF staff but may be an external appointment

³⁰ Normally two OQFERs but may be more depending on the size of the qualification and/or nature of the OQF appeal

When established, the OQF Appeal Committee considers the comments of the Awarding Body on the Final Draft of the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the Final Draft of the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report and the subsequent amendments made by the OQF Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Panel to the relevant Final Report.

On occasion the OQF Appeal Committee may re-evaluate modules³¹ to ensure agreement with the outcome of the Listing or Alignment evaluation outcome of the entire qualification or, where applicable, the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review³².

Consistent with the scope of their authority, an OQF Appeal Committee is authorised to make decisions and direct the QQFACC to make changes to the Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report as required.

The DGNQF adopts this scrutiny as a means to confirm its obligations for transparency and fairness are being met in undertaking the OQF processes.

Grounds for Appeal

The OQF Appeals Manual describes the grounds for an Awarding Body to raise an OQF appeal: These are:

- Significant factual inaccuracies and/or omissions raised by the Awarding Body on the First Draft of the OQF Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the First Draft of the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report have not been corrected despite providing appropriate evidence to the relevant OQF Panel and/or the DGNQF
- The Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment was conducted in a manner that did not comply with the relevant OAAAQA Policies regarding the OQF
- The Awarding Body perceives that the Listing or Alignment evaluation or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review was carried out in a prejudicial manner that led to an outcome the Awarding Body regards as unfair
- The formal outcome is manifestly at odds with the respective commentary in the relevant Final Report
- The process for Listing Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment deviated from that set out in the OQF Manual in ways that were not agreed by both parties

An OQF appeal may only relate to matters raised by an Awarding Body in its comments on the First Draft of the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the First Draft of the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report and/or on the outcome of decisions on Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment. The Awarding Body cannot raise an OQF appeal on matters that it did not raise with the OQF Listing or Alignment Panel and/or the DGNQF on the First Draft of the applicable Report.

Confidentiality

Shortlisted OQFERs must complete and sign the OQF Confidentiality Declaration Form and return it to the Director General of the DGNQF before being confirmed as a member of an OQF Appeal Committee. Confidentiality must be maintained throughout the OQF appeal process and any time thereafter.

³¹ For example, where the recommended OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value does not meet the specification of the required Qualification Type, preventing the Listing or Alignment of the qualification

³² For example, where significant change has been made to the modules of a programme or new modules added that has an impact on the OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification and/or the Qualification Type

OQF Appeal Committee

The OAAAQA expects OQF Appeal Committee members to be familiar with the OQF Appeals Manual and in particular the responsibilities of the OQF Appeal Committee.

Responsibility

It is important the OQF Appeal Committee members independently review the OQF Appeal Submission from the Awarding Body together with the supporting materials and other relevant documentation. Members must not delegate this responsibility to others.

The OAAAQA expects that all OQF Appeal Committee members give thorough consideration to the supporting materials and/or commentary submitted by the Awarding Body to provide evidence against the OQF appeal.

OQF Appeal Committee members must:

- Not comment on matters that are not under appeal by the Awarding Body
- Complete and return OQF appeal documentation in a timely manner
- Not directly contact the appellant Awarding Body. All communication must be made through the OQFACC
- Participate in OQF Appeal Committee meetings as directed by the OQFACC and provide input to the compiled OQF Appeal Report
- Approve the final OQF appeal decision and the Final OQF Appeal Report

OQF Appeal Committee Methodology

Consideration of the Appeal Submission

The OQFACC forwards the relevant documentation to each OQF Appeal Committee member. These are the:

- Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Application from the Awarding Body
- Supporting material from the Awarding Body to supplement their application
- First Draft of the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the First Draft of the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report, as applicable
- Awarding Body's comments on the First Draft of the resulting Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the First Draft of the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report, as applicable
- Response of the OQF Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Panel to the Awarding Body's comments on the First Draft of the Evaluation or Review Report and the actions taken as a result
- Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the Final Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report approved by the OAAAQA Board

Any other documentation regarded as relevant by the OQFACC and the Director General of the DGNQF.

Guiding Questions for OQF Appeal Committee

The OQF Appeal Committee must address the following questions:

- Does the OQF appeal relate only to matters raised by the Awarding Body in its comments on the applicable First Draft of the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report and/or any subsequent changes made by the DGNQF?
- Were the OQF processes under the OQF appeal conducted in line with the relevant OAAAQA Policies relating to the OQF as described in detail in the OQF Manual?
- Was the OQF Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Panel fair and consistent in their deliberations?

- Did the OQF Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Panel, as applicable, explain the reasons for the outcome in the Listing or Alignment evaluation or the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review?
- Did the OQF Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Panel, as applicable, adequately address all concerns raised by the Awarding Body in regard to the First Draft of the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the First Draft of the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report?
- Did the DGNQF adequately record their reasons for rejecting any of the Awarding Body's comments on the First Draft of the Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the First Draft of the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report?
- Did the DGNQF provide appropriate support to the Awarding Body?
- Does the OQF Appeal Committee recommend that any modules be re-evaluated for Listing or Alignment?

Conduct of the OQF Appeal Committee Meeting

In preparation for the OQF Appeal Committee meeting, the OQFACC prepares the agenda, the venue, logistics and collated Draft OQF Appeal Report for the OQF Appeal Committee's deliberation and decision. The OQFACC drafts the minutes of the meeting and makes amendments to the Draft OQF Appeal Report, which records the outcome of the appeal and submits these to the OQF Appeal Committee members for approval.

The final decision is made by the OQF Appeal Committee and on their approval, the draft Report becomes the Final OQF Appeal Report.

Final OQF Appeal Report

All OQF Appeal Committee members must sign the Final OQF Appeal Report to record their agreement with the Report before it is submitted to the OAAAQA Board, for information.

The OAAAQA CEO informs the Awarding Body of the OQF appeal decision and sends the Final OQF Appeal Report to the nominated contact person within the Awarding Body

Where applicable, the OQF Appeal Committee directs the OQFACC to amend the Final Listing or Alignment Evaluation Report or the Final Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Review Report to reflect the outcome of the OQF Appeal Committee decision. The OQFACC sends the amended report to the Director General of the DGNQF prior to its submission to the OAAAQA CEO, for approval. The DGNQF sends the approved amended report to the Awarding Body and updates the NRQ, as applicable.

APPENDIX F: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR OQF APPEALS

These FAQs are intended to provide brief answers to frequently asked questions regarding OQF appeals. The OQF Appeals Manual is the definitive source of information and should be referred to for a more complete response.

Appendix X: Frequently Asked Questions		
#	Question	Answer
1	Why does the OAAAQA have an OQF appeal process?	An OQF appeal process is important to ensure the fairness and validity of the national quality management system (NQMS) and is in line with the national requirements in Oman
2	May anyone (for example, a lecturer) request an OQF appeal?	Only those in specifically designated positions may submit the OQF Appeal Application and OQF Appeal Submission Forms to the Director General of the DGNQF
3	Does the Awarding Body lodging an OQF Appeal have an opportunity to challenge the membership of the OQF Appeal Committee?	The DGNQF takes every effort to avoid conflicts of interest and consults the Awarding Body in this regard
4	Is the OQF Appeal proceedings and results made public?	OQF appeals and the outcomes of such appeals are not made public. They remain between the Awarding Body and the DGNQF
5	Who are the OQFERs?	The OQFERs are qualification experts that have successfully completed training by the OAAAQA on the OQF processes, policies and procedures
6	Can an Awarding Body appeal against the results of an OQF appeal?	No. The OQF Appeal Committee's decision is final
7	Is an OQF appeal managed independently of the DGNQF?	Yes, it is a process that is independent of the DGNQF. Each OQF Appeal Committee comprises of people that had no involvement in the original Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment
8	What is the difference between an 'OQF appeal' and a 'complaint'?	Complaints may arise from a wide variety of issues and these are usually possible to resolve informally between concerned parties. An OQF appeal is a very specific request to the OAAAQA to change the Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment outcome
9	Does an OQF appeal have to be conducted in English?	No. The OQF appeal can be conducted in either English or Arabic, depending on the language used in the original OQF Application. This should be confirmed with the Director General of the DGNQF at the time the Awarding Body submits the OQF Appeal Application Form
10	Are OQF appeals common internationally?	An appeal is not common and should be made only in exceptional circumstances
11	Why are Awarding Bodies asked to provide the date they intend to submit the OQF Appeal Submission Form to the DGNQF?	This gives an indication to the Director General of the DGNQF of the date on which the Awarding Body is likely to submit the OQF appeal enabling the Director General to plan the DGNQF resources accordingly and to convene an OQF Appeal Committee

NOTES

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