



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

On

The IFSCA Circular titled “Complaint Handling and Grievance Redressal by Regulated Entities in the IFSC”

Disclaimer: These FAQs are not intended to constitute an interpretation of law but are meant solely to provide clarity on the circular issued by IFSCA titled “*Complaint Handling and Grievance Redressal by Regulated Entities in the IFSC*”. In the event of any inconsistency between these FAQs and the provisions of any Acts / Regulations / Rules / Circulars, the latter shall prevail.

1. Who can file a complaint under the IFSCA complaint handling process?

A consumer may file a complaint concerning a financial product or a financial service provided by an entity regulated by IFSCA in the IFSC in accordance with the mechanism specified by IFSCA in the circular titled *“Complaint Handling and Grievance Redressal by Regulated Entities in the IFSC”* dated December 02, 2024 (“the Circular”).

2. Where should a consumer file a complaint?

The consumer should first approach the regulated entity, who is registered & regulated by IFSCA and submit the complaint to its Complaint Redressal Officer.

3. Which matters are not treated as complaints?

The following matters are not treated as complaints under the circular:

- a) anonymous complaints (except whistleblower complaints);
- b) incomplete or un-specific complaints;
- c) allegations without supporting documents;
- d) suggestions or seeking guidance / explanation;
- e) complaints on matters not related to the financial products or services provided by the regulated entity;
- f) complaints about any unregistered / unregulated activity;
- g) references in the nature of seeking information or clarifications about financial products or services.

4. Where can consumers find the complaint handling policy and contact details?

The regulated entities have been mandated to prominently publish their policy on complaint handling and grievance redressal, along with names and contact details of the Complaint Redressal Officer (“CRO”) and Complaint Redressal Appellate Officer (“CRAO”), on their websites (or webpage of any of their group entities).

5. What happens after the regulated entity receives a complaint?

The Complaint Redressal Officer (CRO) assesses the complaint on its merits. If the complaint is accepted, the entity must acknowledge acceptance in writing within 3 working days of receipt. If it is not accepted, the entity must inform the person within 5 working days and give reasons.

6. What is the timeline for disposal of complaints filed by a retail client with a Regulated Entity?

Once accepted, the complaint should preferably be disposed of within 15 days and ordinarily no later than 30 days from the date of acceptance. The Regulated Entity may

either resolve or reject the complaint. If the complaint is rejected, the reasons for rejection must be communicated to the complainant in writing.

7. When and how can a complainant appeal to the CRAO?

If a complainant is not satisfied with the resolution given by the Complaint Redressal Officer, or if the complaint is rejected, he may appeal to the Complaint Redressal Appellate Officer of the regulated entity. The appeal should preferably be filed within 21 days of receiving the CRO's decision.

8. What is the timeline for disposal of appeal by CRAO?

The Complaint Redressal Appellate Officer shall dispose of the appeal within 30 days.

9. When and how can a person file a complaint with IFSCA?

After completing the regulated entity's appeal process, if a complainant remains dissatisfied, he may email the complaint to IFSCA at grievance-redressal@ifsc.gov.in. The complaint should preferably be filed within 21 days of receiving the decision of the CRAO.

Where a complaint is against a trading member, clearing member, depository participant, bullion trading member or bullion clearing member, the complainant must first approach the relevant Market Infrastructure Institution ("MII") before approaching IFSCA.

10. What information should a person provide while filing a complaint with IFSCA?

The complaint should include:

- a) Name and contact details of the complainant;
- b) Name of the concerned Regulated Entity;
- c) Relevant account, transaction or complaint reference details;
- d) A brief description of the grievance, including relevant dates and the relief sought;
- e) A copy of the complaint filed with the CRO and the CRO's response;
- f) A copy of the appeal filed with the CRAO and the CRAO's decision; and
- g) Copies of relevant correspondence and supporting documents.

11. When can a complaint filed with IFSCA be treated as closed / disposed?

Where a complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the CRAO of the regulated entity and has approached IFSCA, the IFSCA shall examine and try to get the complaint redressed through the relevant regulated entity and inform the outcome to the complainant. The complaint will be treated as closed after such response from IFSCA.

Where a complainant has approached IFSCA without following the due process specified in the Circular, IFSCA may refer the matter back to the complainant advising him to follow the process specified in the Circular. In such cases, IFSCA shall treat the matter to be closed/ disposed of until the complainant reaches out again after exhausting the processes (including appeal mechanism) laid out in the Circular.

However, in exceptional cases, where the IFSCA is satisfied that an urgent intervention is needed, the IFSCA may entertain a complaint in order to protect the interests of the consumers and/or to ensure integrity of the financial services market in the IFSC.
