



UK Research
and Innovation

Creating SMART Complaint Actions

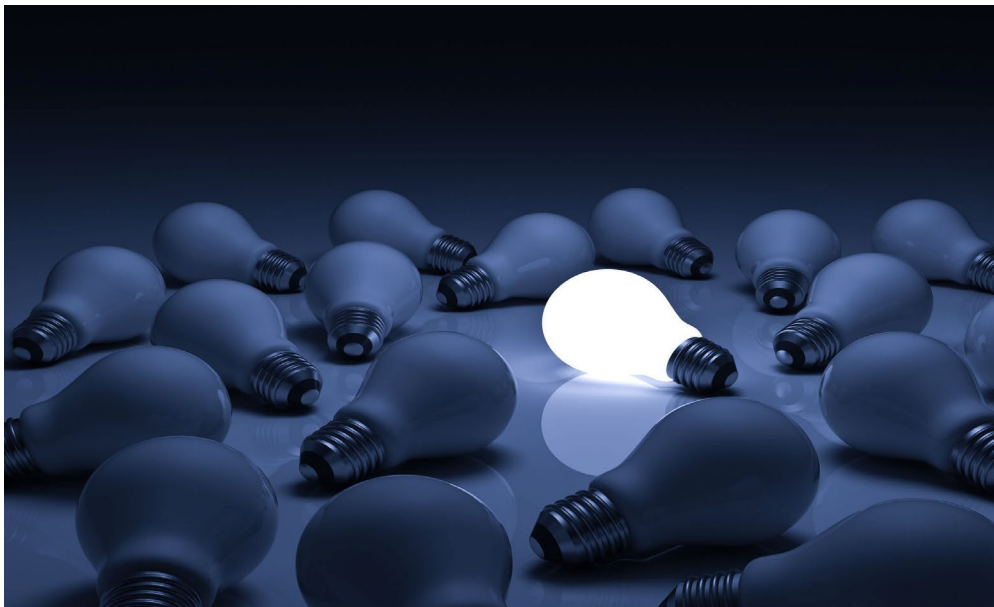




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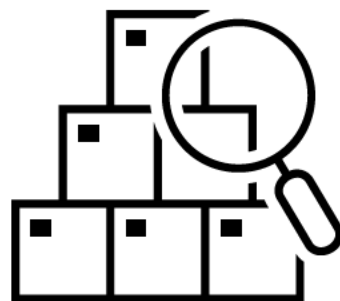
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Why make complaint actions SMART?

SMART actions transform complaint investigation findings into structured, actionable opportunities for improvement.

They ensure clarity for action owners and their colleagues, and effectiveness in addressing the complaint issue raised.

They enable tracking, accountability and measurement, contributing to continuous improvement and better service to our communities.



Things to think about



Complaint actions are organisational risks and are administered via UKRI's risk management system (CGR).

Action owners must be consulted before actions are finalised. They must carefully consider the timescales they commit to before actions are confirmed in the complaint response letter.

Evidence that the action has been completed must be supplied before the action can be closed. Investigators and action owners should consult existing [Evidence Guidance](#) to ensure it is possible to evidence actions as they are written in the complaint response letter.

Definition

Using the SMART approach to action definition is helpful because the five aspects noted in the model below help to focus on what's required and evaluate the action's wording.

SMART

Specific

What documents, people, systems or processes are involved? What change is being made?

Measurable

What will prove the action has been completed? Consult the [Evidence Guidance](#).

Achievable

Are the resources and skills, including people, available to complete the action?

Relevant

Consider the benefits of change, internally to colleagues and externally to our communities.

Time Bound

Do other priorities conflict with this action? Is the timescale realistic?

Method: Creating a SMART complaint action

1. Review the model of what SMART means (previous page).
2. Write the action considering all the elements of SMART model. At a minimum, actions **must** be specific, measurable and time-bound.

EXAMPLE

Draft action: FLF team to review training for panel members.

SPECIFIC: what are we reviewing the training for – what do we think is missing? What will be added to address the problem, if needed? Detail should be included in the action and not reliant on content in the body of the complaint response letter.

MEASURABLE: to show the complaint issue is addressed, and provide auditable evidence that the action is complete

ATTAINABLE: although not explicit in the action, consideration must be given to whether the action owner (the FLF team) has the expertise and time to carry out the action

RELEVANT: review how completing this action now supports wider operational or organisational goals (e.g. why does having better trained panel members matter)

TIME-BOUND: for conducting/completing the training review and issuing revised materials (if needed). This should be in the body of the action and not only recorded in a date box in CGR.

Action rewritten:

FLF team to review training materials for panel members to ensure content includes interview techniques and EDI matters. If needed, revised materials should be made available in line with planned panel member training, the next FLF Round of interviews or by Qx-202x, whichever is first.

Examples: Making a complaint actions SMART

Example 1

Draft
Action

Roll out an EDI guidance pack for assessors

Revised
Action

The EDI team will work with the IT and Applications team to publish existing EDI guidance for assessors about the standards expected in providing feedback and key aspects of the Equality Act 2010. The pack will be published on the Assessor Portal and will be completed by end Q2.

Example 2

Draft
Action

To review and update the Council's application forms for recruitment to corporate governance committees to ensure they only request information which informs the assessment the panel undertake on candidate suitability (the published essential criteria).

Revised
Action

The Council's Recruitment Team will review and update the application forms for recruitment to corporate governance committees, removing fields for information not related to the role's essential criteria. This will be done before the next recruitment round in Q3.

Summary

Compose actions that clearly reflect the activities to be undertaken.

Agree the wording and timescale with the action owner.

Consider the requirement for evidence.

S – include detail

M – define evidence

A – consider who and their capacity

R – consider outcomes

T – accurate timescales

Resources

UKRI Complaints Source page: [Complaints](#)

Council Complaint Leads: [listed here](#)

UKRI Complaints Team: complaints@ukri.org

