



**UGANDA
COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION**

UGANDA COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION COMPLAINTS HANDLING GUIDELINES 2021

1. INTRODUCTION

Section 5(j) & 5(k) of the Uganda Communications Act 2013 mandates Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) to receive, investigate and arbitrate complaints relating to communications services, and take the necessary action; as well as promote and safeguard the interests of consumers and operators as regards the quality of communications services and equipment.

This duo mandate obliges UCC to receive second-level complaints from consumers after they have been to their respective service provider/s and are dissatisfied with the outcome of those engagements or an unable to access their providers.

To this end, UCC through the Consumer Affairs (CA) unit of the Directorate of Industry Affairs and Content Development (DIAC) runs an advocacy and complaints unit necessary for the execution of this mandate.

2. PURPOSE

These Guidelines highlight how the Commission meets its complaints handling mandate under Sections 5(j) & 5(k) of the Uganda Communications Act 2013.

They are designed to ensure that consumer complaints are managed through an effective and consistent process that meets the requirements of the Communications Act 2013 and the current UCC standard for handling consumer complaints.

The Guidelines are relevant to all staff but crucial to employees involved in responding to complaints.

3. DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT

A complaint refers to an expression of dissatisfaction by a consumer relating to the quality of communications services in Uganda.

4. HOW TO LODGE A COMPLAINT

A consumer who is dissatisfied with a communications product or service should contact and report the matter to their respective service provider in the first instance. If dissatisfied with the outcome of this

engagement, the consumer can lodge the complaint with UCC in one of the following ways:

- By completing a complaint form on our website: www.ucc.co.ug
- Phone 0800222777 – Toll-free.
- Send an email to: complaints@ucc.co.ug
- Via UCC’s Social Media platforms: @UCC_Official ; @ConsumerUCC
- A letter addressed to:
The Executive Director, UCC
Plot 42-46 Spring Road Bugolobi,
P.O Box 7376 Kampala.
- By visiting the Consumer Affairs Unit on the 3rd Floor,
Communications House, Plot 1 Colville Street, 5 Portal Avenue,
Kampala.

OR

- The Commissions Regional Offices at the addresses below:
 - Eastern: Plot 39/41 Republic Street, Mbale.
 - Western: Plot 7 Galt Road, Mbarara.
 - Northern: Plot 31 Main Street, Andrea Olal Road, Gulu.
 - North Western: Plot 8 Ntuha Road, Masindi.

5. COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT PROCESS

5.1 The UCC Complaints Management Process

A complaints management process is a structured process for receiving, recording, investigating, responding to, and resolving complaints.

5.1.1 Acknowledging and registering

A complaint that is escalated to the UCC is acknowledged and registered upon receipt.

Once a complaint is received, an officer will contact the complainant to clarify/verify the details and request additional information where necessary. See **Annex.2** for Complaint Form

5.1.2 Assessment and investigations

On receipt of a complaint, an initial assessment will be conducted to:

- a) Establish if it falls under the jurisdiction of UCC.
- b) Verify if all channels with the service provider have been exhausted.
- c) Categorise it according to our standard internal categorization.
- d) Assess whether it can be resolved without further investigation.
- e) Establish if additional information or documentation is required to complete an investigation.

5.1.3 Action and Timelines

Complaints differ in complexity and nature and the time taken to handle them will reflect this. Therefore, the required action will depend on the outcome of the assessment. However, UCC is obliged to ensure that complaints are disposed of within thirty (30) working days of receipt.

Some complaints lodged to the Commission are resolved immediately depending on the nature. Where a complaint cannot be resolved immediately the complaint is escalated to the back office (complaints handling unit).

5.1.4 Complaints Escalation

1. Internal escalation: Where necessary, complaints are escalated to other units/departments within the Commission to gather facts and seek technical expertise.
2. External escalation: once all the facts about the complaint have been gathered, the complaint is then escalated to the respective service provider. The service provider immediately acknowledges receipt of the complaint and is required to provide an update on remedies or dispute resolution to the Commission within seven (7) working days.
3. A conclusion should have been reached and relevant remedies offered within thirty (30) working days of receiving the complaint.
4. If the complaint cannot be resolved immediately, the Commission shall provide feedback to the complainant, ensuring the complainant is informed of the progress and likely timeframes for resolution.
5. UCC shall promptly communicate any decision or action to the complainant and the same is demanded from service providers.

5.1.5 Remedies

If there is no resolution offered by the service provider or the relevant provider does not reply to the Commission's notification, the Commission shall arrive at an appropriate determination as it deems fit.

Where the complainant is not satisfied with the offer for resolution, the Commission will decide whether the rejection of the resolution is reasonable or not.

If the rejection is deemed unreasonable, the Commission shall advise that the complainant accept the resolution. However, if the rejection of the resolution is deemed reasonable, the Commission shall act to assist the complainant accordingly.

Where the complainant or service provider is not satisfied with the resolution or decision of the Commission, they shall have the right to seek redress from an appropriate Court/s of law.

Options for remedies suggested to service providers include:

1. Fixing the specific problem complained about.
2. An apology where the complaint is justified
3. An expression of sympathy for the client's situation, or their perception of it, even if the provider has found that it is not at fault.
4. Improving the aspect of service that led to the problem.
5. Offering to meet and explain the service being provided again if the client is confused or misunderstands the service.
6. Offering compensation for either specific loss or general inconvenience.
7. Offering to reduce the bill/charge or to undertake the work to rectify the situation free of charge.

5.1.6 Closing the Complaint

If the complainant accepts the proposed decision or action, then the decision or actions shall be carried out and recorded. However, if the complainant rejects the proposed decision or action, then the complaint shall remain open, and the complainant's decision recorded.

If the complainant seeks an internal review, then the matters will be forwarded to an internal Commission Appellate Committee for final determination.

6. REVIEW OF GUIDELINES

The Commission shall continually review the Guidelines for relevance and alignment with relevant sector trends.

7. STATUS OF THESE GUIDELINES

These Guidelines are for the use and benefit of all staff. They represent best practices in Complaints Management. However, they are not intended to be the only standard of good practice that the Commission can follow.