

SAILENT FEATURES OF RESERVE BANK - INTERGRATED OMBUDSMAN SCHEME 2021

RBI has integrated the following three schemes, i) The Banking Ombudsman Scheme, 2006, as amended up to July 01, 2017, ii) The Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies, 2018 and iii) The Ombudsman Scheme for Digital Transactions, 2019 into one "The Reserve Bank - Integrated Ombudsman Scheme, 2021 " with effect from 12 Nov 2021..

Some of the salient features of the scheme are following:

1. The complaints can be made online in RBI CMS portal (<https://cms.rbi.org.in>) or through electronic mode (E-mail)/ physical form, including postal and hand-delivered complaints.
2. The physical complaint should be signed by the complainant or any Authorised representative other than an Advocate.
3. The Reserve Bank has established the Centralised Receipt and Processing Centre (CRPC) at Chandigarh for receipt of the complaints Pan India.
4. The complaints received directly in any of the offices of the Reserve Bank will be forwarded to the Centralised Receipt and Processing Centre for further action.
5. Any customer aggrieved by an act or omission of a Bank resulting in deficiency in service may file a complaint under the Scheme.
6. Before submitting a complaint to the Ombudsman, customer should make a written complaint to the concerned Bank. Customer can lodge complaint with Banking Ombudsman only in respect of rejected and partially redressed complaints, cases where complainant is not satisfied with the reply cases where no reply is received from Bank within 30 days after submitting the complaint.
7. Complaints which are in the nature of offering suggestions or seeking guidance or explanation shall not be treated as valid complaints. Complaints falling under non maintainable category will not be entertained by Reserve Bank. (Clause 10 of chapter IV)
8. There is no limit on the amount in a dispute that can be brought before the Ombudsman for which the Ombudsman can pass an Award.
9. For any consequential loss suffered by the complainant, the Ombudsman have the power to provide a compensation up to Rupees 20 lakh, in addition to, up to Rupees One lakh for the loss of the complainant's time, expenses incurred and for harassment/mental anguish suffered by the complainant.
10. The Bank should furnish written reply along with all the relevant documents to the Ombudsman within 15 days of receipt of complaint. In case Bank omits/fails to file its written version and documents within 15 days, then Ombudsman may proceed exparte ased on the evidence available on record and pass appropriate Order or issue an Award.

11. Non-furnishing of documents/ information within 15 days by Bank may lead to an Award by the Ombudsman for which Bank shall not have any right of appeal.
12. In cases of complaints which cannot be redressed within 15 days then Principal Nodal Officer should make a written request to Ombudsman immediately upon receipt of complaint seeking further extension of time.
13. If any amicable settlement of the complaint is arrived at between the parties, the same shall be recorded and signed by both the parties and thereafter, the fact terms of settlement may be recorded, directing the parties to comply with the terms within the stipulated time.
14. The complaint would be deemed to be resolved when:
 - (a) It has been settled by the Bank with the complainant upon the intervention of the Ombudsman; or
 - (b) The complainant has agreed in writing or otherwise (which may be recorded) that the manner and the extent of resolution of the grievance is satisfactory; or
 - (c) The complainant has withdrawn the complaint voluntarily.
15. The Ombudsman shall pass an Award in the event of:
 - (a) Non-furnishing of documents/ information as enumerated in clause 14(4); or
 - (b) The matter is not getting resolved under clause 14(9) based on records placed, and after affording a reasonable opportunity of being heard to both the parties.
 - (c) The Ombudsman shall also take into account, in addition, the principles of banking law and practice, directions, instructions and guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank from time to time and such other factors as may be relevant, before passing a reasoned Award.
16. The Award shall contain, inter alia, the direction, to the Bank for specific performance of its obligations and the amount, if any, to be paid by the Bank to the complainant by way of compensation for any loss suffered by the complainant.
17. The compensation that can be awarded by the Ombudsman shall be exclusive of the amount involved in the dispute.
18. The Award passed shall lapse and be of no effect unless the complainant furnishes a letter of acceptance of the Award in full and final settlement of the claim to the Bank concerned, within a period of 30 days from the date of receipt of the copy of the Award.
19. The Bank should comply with the Award and intimate compliance to the Ombudsman within 30 days from the date of receipt of the letter of acceptance from the complainant.
20. There shall not be any right of appeal to Bank for an Award issued for non-furnishing of documents/ information.

21. Both Bank and Complainant have 30 days time from the date of receipt of communication of Award or closure/rejection of the complaint, to appeal before the Appellate Authority.
22. The Bank has appointed CGM, Operations Wing as the Principal Nodal Officer at head office who is responsible for representing the Bank and furnishing information on behalf of the Bank. The Bank has appointed Nodal Officers at each Circle to assist the Principal Nodal Officer for operational efficiency. Overseeing executive of Operations Section at RO is the Nodal officer at RO.
23. The name and contact details (Telephone/Mobile number E-mail Id) of the Principal Nodal Officer complaint lodging link (<https://cms.rbi.org.in>) are to be displayed in branch along with salient features of the Integrated Ombudsman Scheme 2021.
24. Branches to ensure that a copy of the Scheme is available to be provided to the customer for reference upon request.

(Updated on 31.07.2024)