

Frequently Asked Questions ("FAQs") regarding appeal with Ombudsman for Resolution of Grievances under National Pension System ("NPS") & Atal Pension Yojana ("APY")

Sl. No.	Questions & Responses
1.	<p><b>Who is an Ombudsman under NPS/APY?</b>                      The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has appointed an Ombudsman to receive, consider and facilitate resolution of complaints or grievances under the ambit of PFRDA (Redressal of Subscriber Grievance) Regulations, 2015 and amendments thereof. These regulations are available on the website of PFRDA (<a href="http://www.pfrda.org.in">www.pfrda.org.in</a>)</p>
2.	<p><b>What are the powers and functions of the Ombudsman?</b>                      The Ombudsman shall have the following powers and functions to receive complaints against any intermediary or entity and to consider such complaints and facilitate resolution thereof through amicable settlement in accordance with the applicable Regulation(s); and Adjudicate such complaints in the event of failure of settlement.</p>
	<p><b>What is the address of Ombudsman and contact details?</b>                      The Office of Ombudsman Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority,                      Tower E, 5th Floor, E-500,                      World Trade Center,                      Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi – 110029                      Phone No.: 011-4071 7900                      Email Id: <a href="mailto:ombudsman@pfrda.org.in">ombudsman@pfrda.org.in</a></p>
4.	<p><b>Who can file an Appeal with Ombudsman?</b>                      An Appeal may be filed with the Ombudsman under PFRDA (Redressal of Subscriber Grievance) Regulations, 2015, by a complainant-whose grievance has not been resolved within 21 days from its escalation by filing a complaint with the National Pension System Trust (NPST); or where a complaint has been made directly against the NPST (and no other intermediary), and the same is not resolved within the specified period of 21 days; or in relation to a complaint against any other pension scheme regulated by the Authority, whose grievance is not resolved within a period of 30 days from its filing.</p>
5	<p><b>What is the process of filing of an Appeal and whether there is any format of the Appeal?</b>                      The Appeal to the Ombudsman has to be filed in writing duly signed by the Complainant or his authorized representative. However, a legal practitioner cannot file Appeal on behalf of a complainant. The Appeal has to be filed in the specified format (Annexure B). An Appeal can be filed against the decision of NPST within 45 days of the receipt of the response from NPST.</p>

6.	<p><b>Can the Ombudsman reject an Appeal?</b></p> <p>I. The Appeal would be accepted only if:</p> <p>(a). prior to its filing, a complaint was made to the concerned intermediary and the same was either rejected or not replied to within 30 days, and</p> <p>(b). thereafter, the complaint was escalated to NPST and not resolved within 21 days; or</p> <p>(c). If the complaint is against NPST itself, the same is not resolved by NPST within 21 days of its receipt.</p> <p>II. Ombudsman can reject the Appeal if:</p> <p>(a). the Appeal is not filed within 45 days from the date of receipt of response of the NPST with which the complainant is dissatisfied; or</p> <p>(b). the Appeal is not filed within next 45 days following the date of expiry of 21 days from the date of filing of complaint with the NPST, and for which no response was received from NPST.</p> <p>Provided that the Ombudsman may entertain an Appeal beyond the specified period of 45 days, on sufficient reasons being provided by the complainant/Appellant.</p> <p>(c). if the appeal is in respect of the same subject-matter which was settled or decided by the designated member or Ombudsman concerned in any previous proceedings.</p> <p>(d). the Appeal pertains to the same subject matter for which any proceedings before the Authority or any court, tribunal or any other forum, is pending or a decree or award or a final order has already been passed.</p> <p>III. An Appeal may be dismissed, if it is frivolous in the opinion of Ombudsman.</p>
7.	<p><b>What happens after an Appeal is received by the Ombudsman?</b></p> <p>The Ombudsman sends a notice along with a copy of the Appeal to the intermediary or NPS Trust as the case may be, named in the Appeal and aims to resolve the complaint/grievance by engaging with both the parties. If any amicable settlement or mutual agreement is arrived at between the parties, as permitted within the provisions of applicable regulations, the Ombudsman shall pass an award in terms of such settlement or agreement, within thirty days from the date thereof and direct the parties to perform their obligations, in accordance with the terms recorded in the award.</p>
8.	<p><b>Does Ombudsman have the power to call for information?</b></p> <p>Yes, An Ombudsman has powers to call upon the intermediary, named in the Appeal, to provide the necessary and relevant information.</p>
9.	<p><b>How does Ombudsman handle the information received while discharging duty?</b></p> <p>The Ombudsman maintains confidentiality of any information or document coming to his knowledge or possession in the course of discharging his duties.</p> <p>However, the Ombudsman can share the information with PFRDA or share the details of the award for the purpose of the publication in any journal or newspaper, including website or for filing before any court, forum or authority,</p>

	if so required.
	<b>What happens if the complaint is not settled by agreement?</b>
<b>10.</b>	If the matter is not resolved by settlement within a period of 30 days of the receipt of the Appeal or such extended period as may be permitted by the Ombudsman, he may, based upon the material placed before him and after hearing both the parties, pass his award in writing or pass any other directions or orders as he may consider appropriate.
	<b>Does the provisions of the Evidence Act apply in the proceedings before Ombudsman?</b>
<b>11.</b>	In proceedings before the Ombudsman strict rules of evidence under the Evidence Act, 1872 (1 of 1872) shall not apply and the Ombudsman may determine his own procedure consistent with the principles of natural justice.
	<b>Does Ombudsman hold oral hearings and do the subscribers need to attend those hearings?</b>
<b>12.</b>	The Ombudsman shall decide whether to hold oral hearings for the presentation of facts and evidence or whether the proceeding shall be conducted on the basis of documents and other materials on record, including electronic and digital medium. Provided that it shall not be necessary for a complainant to be present in the oral proceedings and the Ombudsman may decide on the basis of documents and other materials on record.
	<b>What is the timeline to issue an award by the Ombudsman?</b>
<b>13.</b>	The award on adjudication shall be made by the Ombudsman within a period of ninety days from the date of the filing of the complaint. Provided that no award shall be invalidated by reason alone of the fact that the award was made beyond the said period of ninety days.
	<b>What could be the maximum quantum of Award/compensation that can be awarded by the Ombudsman?</b>
<b>14.</b>	The Ombudsman can award (including compensation and interest, if any) up to a maximum of Rs. 10,00,000/- (Rupees Ten lacs). If the amount exceeds Rs.10,00,000/- (Rupees Ten lacs), such order/award is sent to PFRDA for confirmation. The Designated Member of PFRDA may confirm or vary the order/award, after hearing the parties concerned.

15.	<p><b>Can the award given by Ombudsman be changed or corrected?</b></p> <p>(a). Within 15 days from the receipt of the award, a party, with notice to the other party, may request the Ombudsman to correct any computation errors, clerical or typographical errors or other errors of a similar nature occurring in the award.</p> <p>(b). If the Ombudsman considers the request made, he shall make the correction within 15 days.</p> <p>(c). The Ombudsman may also rectify any error on his own initiative, within fifteen days from the date of the award.</p>
16.	<p><b>What is the finality of award of Ombudsman and is there any recourse available for revision?</b></p> <p>Any party aggrieved by the award passed by the Ombudsman may, within 30 days from the receipt of the award or corrected award, file an application for revision before the PFRDA, setting out the grounds for revision of the award.</p> <p>The award of Ombudsman is final and binding on the parties and persons claiming under them except when revised by the designated member of PFRDA, after which there would be no further revision.</p> <p>The award of Ombudsman may be revised by the designated member of the PFRDA, only if there is substantial miscarriage of justice, or there is an error apparent on the face of the award.</p>
17.	<p><b>How one can apply for revision of the award?</b></p> <p>An aggrieved party who is directed to pay amount mentioned in the award to the other party, may file revision. Such application for revision is not entertained by the designated member of PFRDA unless the party filing the revision has deposited with the Authority, 75 % of the amount mentioned in the award. However, the designated member of the Authority may waive or reduce the amount to be deposited, after recording the reasons in writing. The designated member of the Authority may revise the award and pass such order, as it may deem appropriate.</p>
18.	<p><b>What is the procedure adopted by PFRDA while revising the award of Ombudsman?</b></p> <p>PFRDA follows the principles of natural justice in the matter of disposing of an application for revision.</p>
19.	<p><b>How does the directed party implement the award?</b></p> <p>The directed party is obligated to implement an award of the Ombudsman or an order of the Designated Member of PFRDA, as the case may be, within 30 days of its receipt.</p>

20.	<p><b>What are the consequences if any person fails to implement the award or order of the Designated Member of PFRDA passed in the revision petition, without reasonable cause?</b></p> <p>In such a case, the party will be deemed to have failed to redress subscribers' grievances and may be liable for –</p> <p>(a). Suspension or cancellation of certificate of registration; or  (b). other action permissible which may be deemed appropriate in the facts and circumstances of the case.</p>
21.	<p><b>What is the format in which an Appeal can be filed?</b></p> <p>Please refer to the <b>Annexure B</b> below.</p>
22.	<p><b>Will the Appeal be accepted if it is not in the prescribed format?</b></p> <p>If the appeal is not in the prescribed format, it is liable to be rejected.</p>
23.	<p><b>Is there any cost involved in filing of complaints with Ombudsman?</b></p> <p>No. However, The Ombudsman or the designated member of the Authority may impose cost on the complainant for filing complaint or any petition for revision, which is frivolous.</p>
24.	<p><b>What is the role of intermediaries for creating awareness about the services of Ombudsman for resolution of complaints?</b></p> <p>Every intermediary or entity under the National Pension System and any other pension scheme regulated by the Authority shall display the name, address and contact details of the Grievance Redressal Officer within such intermediaries or entities and also the name, address and contact details of Ombudsman as specified by the Authority to whom the complaints are to be made by any aggrieved person in public domain including its website and office premises in such manner and at such place, so that it is put to sufficient notice of the subscribers visiting its office premises.</p>
25.	<p><b>Can one appeal against the decision of Designated Member?</b></p> <p>Any appeal against the order passed by the designated member of the Authority under this Regulation shall lie with the Securities Appellate Tribunal, as provided in section 36 of the Act.</p>