

## **Certification Appeals Procedure**

### **1. Purpose**

In the event that a complaint or appeal is received from customers, clients, certified organisations, candidates, certified persons, students and/or other parties with regards to the rules, policies, procedures, certification decisions, or overall operations of AAA, this procedure shall be followed.

### **2. Scope**

The procedure covers the complaints and appeals addressed to AAA in response to its assessment actions, recommendations that follow, and the role of the Appeal Committee in reaching a conclusive decision.

### **3. References**

- ISO/IEC 17024:2012, clauses 9.8 and 9.9 on Appeals and Complaints
- ISO/IEC 17021:2015, clauses 9.7 and 9.8 on Appeals and Complaints

### **4. Terms and definitions**

Complaint:

- (ISO/IEC 17000:2004, 6.5): expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal, by any person or organization to a conformity assessment body, relating to the activities of that body, where a response is expected;

Appeal:

- (ISO/IEC 17000:2004, 6.4): request by the provider of the object of conformity assessment to the conformity assessment body for reconsideration by that body of a decision it has made relating to that object.

AAA Services:

- Certification of management systems.

### **5. Procedure overview**

- The purpose of this procedure is to outline the process that should eventuate in the event that a complaint or appeal is received from customers, clients, certified organisations and other parties with regards to the rules, policies, procedures, certification decisions, or overall AAA operations.
- All complaints are reviewed by the Managing Director and/or a designated employee assigned by him or her. The designated employee shall not be part of the staff involved in the assessment against which a complaint or appeal is being issued.
- In the event that the person filing the complaint is not satisfied with the review and the decision made upon the complaint, he or she may consider filing an appeal.
- Subsequently, AAA appoints an Appeal Committee which is in charge of the appeal process, and is accountable for safeguarding the impartiality with respect to the appeal and the

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operations of the organisation. This structure enables the participation of all parties significantly concerned in the development of policies and principles regarding the content and functioning of the AAA's services, without any particular interest predominating.

- The Appeal Committee is composed of at least three members with a majority of members being independent of AAA personnel. Upon request of the Appeal Committee, management will provide to the committee all the necessary information, including the reasons for all significant decisions, actions, and the selection of persons responsible for particular activities, to enable AAA to ensure proper and impartial decision.
- The Appeal Committee is independent of management in their recommendations except as required by international or national law. If the recommendation of the board is not respected by management, the board shall take appropriate measures, which may include informing the relevant accreditation body.

### **5.1 Criteria for selecting the Appeal Committee Members**

The members of an Appeal Committee can be the same as the Certification Scheme Committee or other independent and impartial members assigned by AAA. In the event that a member or members of the Appeal Committee have a conflict of interest, based upon the facts or circumstances of a specific appeal, including employment or other affiliations of the appellant, AAA management, in conjunction with the acting Chair of the Appeal Committee, shall select a substitute member or members to hear and decide upon that claim.

#### **5.2.1 Complaint process**

When the complainant disagrees with the evaluation/assessment given he or she must declare in writing the reasons for disapproval to AAA at their earliest convenience.

The complaint shall be submitted immediately after receiving the re-evaluated decision and no later than 30 working days after receiving the decision.

The complaint shall be submitted in writing through email and/or letter.

The complaint, besides the personal information (full name, address and other contact details) of the complainant, shall include the complainant's personal opinion about the assessment, the reasons for disapproval with the decision reached during the first decision and second evaluation, as well as the settlement being sought.

Submission, investigation and decision on complaints shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the complainant.

Complaints will be reviewed by the Managing Director and/or a designated employee assigned by him or her. The designated employee shall not be part of the staff involved in the initial assessment. The complaint reviewer(s) should consider the complainant's explanation and provide a written response, which includes:

- The reviewer of the complaint should reply within 10 working days after receiving a complaint. The complainant will receive an answer on the decision reached in writing (usually via email).

If the Complainant agrees with the outcome at this stage then the complaint does not proceed to further stages.

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If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, then he or she may file an Appeal (see 5.2.2 Appeals process).

If necessary, AAA will take appropriate correction and corrective actions.

All Complaints, including actions taken, will be tracked and recorded by AAA.

#### **5.2.1.1 Instructions to file a complaint:**

Information to include in your complaint:

Beside personal information (full name, email address, telephone), please write your opinion about the assessment and why you are not satisfied with the first decision and second evaluation.

#### **5.2.2 Appeal process**

Where the Complainant disagrees with the decisions of stage one (re-evaluation) and stage two (complaint), then he or she may proceed to stage three and file an appeal explaining the reasons for disapproval.

Steps to be followed by the appellant:

- The Appeal shall be submitted soon after receiving the complaint decision and no later than 90 days (three months) after receiving the decision.
- The Appeal shall be submitted in writing by email or letter.
- The Appeal shall include the Appeal Fees (if applicable).
- The Appeal, besides the personal information (full name, address and other contact details) of the Appellant, shall include the opinion about the assessment and why the Appellant is not satisfied with first, second evaluation and a review done after the complaint.

Steps to be followed by AAA:

- AAA appoints an Appeal Committee which is in charge of the appeal process, and is accountable for safeguarding the impartiality with respect to the appeal and the operations of the organisation. This structure enables the participation of all parties significantly concerned in the development of policies and principles regarding the content and functioning of the AAA services, without any particular interest is predominating.
- The Appeal Committee will respond to an appellant in writing (usually via email) within 60 days after receiving the appeal. It should be noted that this decision is absolute and final.
- Submission, investigation and decision on Appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the Appellant.
- At AAA discretion, an Appellant may be charged a fee of £200 per appeal. If the appeal decision is in favour of the Appellant, this fee will be reimbursed to him/her.
- If necessary, AAA will take appropriate correction and corrective actions.
- All Appeals, including actions taken, will be tracked and recorded by AAA.