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Definitions

Complaint – A formal written expression of dissatisfaction by any related party about any other party not following specified rules or regulations or breaching an agreement within the verification process.

Appeal – A formal written request for a review of a decision made by HCS regarding verification issues.

Certification decision – A decision made by HCS regarding the issuance, suspension or withdrawal of a certificate.


Roles and responsibilities

Certification customers have the right to lodge complaints and appeals when they feel discontented with services or situations in the context of certification or when in disagreement to a certification decision. The OA or an authorized person handles all complaints and appeal on certification decisions made. In general, the OA:

- Receive and review complaints and appeals.
- Assess the nature of the complaint/appeal
- Make first efforts to settle the case within their authority
- Complete the information section of the corrective action form (CAPA) and forward to the Quality Manager.
- If the complaint/appeal cannot be resolved at this level, it will be escalated to the Appeal & Complaint Committee.

Appeal & Complaint Committee

The Complaint & Appeal Committee is an entity outside the HCB structure. Its members are appointed by the Board Members or the CEO of the HCB itself. Within the scope of certification, unless disputes cannot be settled amicably, complaints and appeals will be forwarded to the Mediation Board. Issues that progress to the Mediation Board will be subject to the full Corrective Action Process as documented in the ISO 9001 system.

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CAPA Flow Chart



Customer Responsibility

A complaint or appeal submission must be documented by the customer in either an email or letter. The information required to act on the complaint/appeal must include;


- A clear description of the nature of the claim, justification of the claim and supporting evidence of the issue(s)
- Grounds for the complaint/appeal should be reasonable. Complaints/appeals lacking clear justification and supporting evidence will be unfounded and will not be processed

HCS Responsibility

All complaints/appeals will be handled professionally, impartially and transparently. Person(s) handling and resolving a complaint/appeal will not be directly involved in the certification activities related to the complaint/appeal. The HCB will acknowledge the receipt of the complaint/appeal with initial confirmation of its relevance within 5 working days and will inform them of the next steps.

Evaluation, information and decision of complaints/appeals

The evaluation, gathering of information and decisions of complaints/appeals will be handled as per the documented Corrective action process in our ISO9001 quality system.

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Communication of the outcome of complaints/appeals

Findings and conclusions of the evaluation are communicated to complainants/appellants within 15 working days after acknowledgement.

Complaints Guidelines

- a. The Top Management shall ensure that avenues such as telephone, e-mail, snail mail, feedback mailers, etc. are available for any/all stakeholders to give feedbacks, suggestions, comments and complaints.
- b. It is the duty of the OA to collate, coordinate and handle all incoming feedbacks, suggestions, comments and complaints from all stakeholders such as the customers, end consumers, authorities, competitors, accreditors inter alia which is to be replied to with an acknowledgement within 5 working days upon receiving it.
- c. If the case cannot be resolved at this level, the OA should then forward any written Complaints & Appeals to all the Complaint & Appeal Committee members via e-mail.
- d. The Complaint & Appeal Committee members shall determine which area of expertise the correspondence is about and seek clarification from the relevant technical expert.
- e. The Complaint & Appeal Committee shall then discuss among themselves and comes out with a recommendation and/or resolution to resolve the issue/s raised.
- f. All correspondence shall be resolved immediately as and when required but a period of latest within 15 working days, timeframe.
- g. The OA shall keep a copy of all the correspondence in hard copy documentation in the office as part of the continuous management review for service performance.