

QSS-QMS Administrative Procedure 07

Issue 2, Revision 00, Effective Date: 1st January 2009

Complaints

1.0 Purpose

To provide methods of documentation, resolution and corrective action if applicable for complaints from clients.

2.0 Scope

Identification, documentation, resolution and corrective action if applicable for complaints are very important because of possible effects on the Registration System and improvements to QSS-QMS procedures to better meet the needs of the client. QSS-QMS will strive to be very open about complaints in order to foster an attitude of continuous improvement. The identification of complaints is open to any person or entity. *Un-resolved complaints may leads to Appeals*. Appeals are identified and processed in accordance with Administrative Procedure 08. Complaints about the Client Quality Program will be evaluated in accordance with the requirements of AP 18.

3.0 References

- ❖ Quality Manual IV, Administrative Structure
- ❖ Quality Manual, Section XV, Appeals
- ❖ ISO 19011 Guidance for conductance of Quality and Environmental Assessments
- ❖ ISO17021:2006(E), Conformity Assessment – requirements for Bodies providing audit & certification of management system

4.0 Implementing/Related Procedures

- ❖ AP 08, Appeals
- ❖ AP 15, Suspension or Withdrawal of Certification
- ❖ AP 16, Internal Corrective Action
- ❖ TP 05, Pre-Assessments

5.0 Attachments and Forms

Attachments: None

Forms: Complaint or Appeal Form

6.0 Definitions

Complaints are defined as items that do not affect the outcome or decision of the certification activities or certification scheme.

Appeal is defined as a disagreement that affects the outcome or decision of the certification activities or certification scheme. .

Client or supplier or company may be used interchangeably. The client in this procedure is not required to have a legal relationship with QSS-QMS.

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Entity: That which can be individually described and considered. Note: an entity may be for example: an activity or a process, a product, an organization, a system, or a person or any combination thereof.

Procedure

7.0 Identification of *Complaints*

Any person or entity may identify complaints. The person or entity does not have to have a legal relationship with QSS-QMS. The Registration Regulations contains information for filing a complaint. Complaints may also be identified from review of the QSS-QMS Performance Evaluation Form.

The complaint may be received by telephone, on a note, by verbal means, on a Complaint, dispute or Appeal Form or by any other means. If the *complaint* is not documented on the Complaint or Appeal Form, the person receiving the *complaint* will document the same on this form. The *complaint* will be sent to the Technical Director for *Decision*, processing and resolution.

8.0 Processing and Resolution of the Complaint

Technical Director

1) Receives the complaint/dispute on the Complaint or Appeals Form. He reviews the complaint/dispute against the definitions of the complaint and appeals. The Technical Director sends notification to the client or the person identifying the complaint within five working days of the identification of the complaint. If the complaint is determined to be an appeal, the appeal will be processed in accordance with Administrative Procedure 08. The Technical Director may delegate someone to investigate or may perform the investigation himself. Whoever performs the investigation must be independent of the situation. The next action is step 2.

Investigator

2) Performs an investigation to determine if the complaint is valid, the real concern of the complaint, the root cause of the complaint, and if corrective action is necessary. The investigator will document what the result of the investigation is on the Complaint or Appeal Form. The root cause and the real concerns identified will be on an attachment to this form. The preferred completion of the investigation of the complaint is two weeks. The only case that the complaint investigation may take longer is if the personnel are not available to thoroughly

conduct the investigation. This documentation will be forwarded to the Technical Director for review. The next action is step 3.

Technical Director

3) Reviews the results of the investigation. If the Technical Director does not agree with the results because of improper investigation or lack of understanding of the requirements, the complaint is returned to the investigator for further investigation and resolution of the

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concerns. When the Technical Director agrees with the conclusion because of the conditions listed above, the completed Complaint or Appeal Form is sent to the client. The root cause, the real concerns, and other investigation information contained on the attachment will remain with QSS-QMS and will not be sent to the client. If corrective action is necessary, the corrective action will be documented on a Corrective Action Report. Verification of Corrective Action will also be documented on the Complaint and Appeal Form. The client is notified and the next action is step 4. The total time for processing, investigation, and approval should not take longer than one month. The only case that process is allowed to be greater than one month is when the personnel are not available for the complaint. If personnel are not available, this situation will be documented in the complaint documentation.

Client

4a) Receives the Complaint or Appeal Form and reviews the results. If the client agrees with the results, no further action is required.

4b) If the client does not agree with the results, the concern will be sent to the Technical Director. The client has 30 calendar days from the date of receipt to disagree with the results. The next action is step 5a.

Technical Director

5a) Reviews the concerns or disagreements of the client. The Technical Director makes a decision whether the concerns are valid or not valid. If the concerns are not valid, the Technical Director will contact the client and discuss his decision with the client. If the client convinces the Technical Director that the concerns are valid, an additional investigation will be conducted starting at step 3 and continuing through the process.

5b) If the client and the Technical Director disagree on the validity of the concern, the client will be advised to contact the proper accreditation body about the complaint. **In case of any issues the Technical Director will ask client for a meeting either by phone or in person. If the matter not gets resolved then this will be treat as complaint & follow the step 5b for complaint.**

5c) If correspondence is received from an Accreditation Body agreeing with the concerns identified in the client's complaint, the situation will be review by the Technical Director. The case will be handled on an individual basis.

5d) Any complaint not resolved at Technical Director shall be referred to Advisory Board.

9.0 Quality Records

Quality Records generated by this procedure are

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- a) Complaint or Appeal Form
- b) Investigation Results (Attachment to Complaint or Appeal Form)
- c) Correspondence concerning complaint

10.0 Approvals

Technical Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized letter 'J' with a horizontal line above it and a small dot below it.

Date: 1st January 2009