

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

1. SCOPE

This procedure has been documented to address ISO 17021 clause 9.7 “Appeals” & 9.8 “Complaints”

2. DEFINITIONS

- **The Company** - Advanced Certification
- **The Board** - The Board of Directors of Advanced Certification
- **Complaint** - a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable
- **Appeal** - application to a higher authority for a reversal of a decision

3. Appeals

In the event of certificate withdrawal or if a client company does not accept a non-conformity or recommendation for registration, the company has the right of appeal

Should the company intend to appeal then they should inform the auditor during the closing meeting, at which time the auditor should direct the client to contact the AC office and request an appeal form.

The appeal form should be completed as well as a formal documented substantiation for submission to Advanced Certification Limited within fourteen days of the receipt of the intention of withdrawal notice or the date of the audit.

Appeals will receive an acknowledgment of receipt immediately and the first level investigation shall be completed within a maximum of 30 days from initial receipt.

Upon receipt of the completed appeals form, the details will be entered onto the appeals register to enable tracking of the status of the appeal,

All client company appeals will be initially reviewed by the appointed certificate decision maker(s) and the Advanced Certification Limited audit staff responsible for the recommendation to withdraw the certificate or identification of the non-conformity - who must provide evidence to support their recommendation.

Should the appointed decision maker reject the appeal then it will be passed to the Board for appraisal. Should the Board concur with the decision maker(s) finding then the appeals committee, drawn from the independent members of the impartiality committee shall consider the appeal.

The appellant will be advised of the names of the appeals committee and the appellant has the right to dispute the members of the appeals committee by formal notification of their dispute. This dispute will be reviewed by the chairman of the committee or, if the chairman is a member of the appeals committee, by the vice-chairman. The result of the appeals committee review will be notified to the company.

The decision of the appeals committee is final and shall be binding on both parties. Once the decision on the appeal has been made no counter claim by either party can be made to amend or change the decision.

The decision of the appeals committee shall be communicated to the appellant without delay

In instances where the appeal has been successful, and the certificate is re-instated or the non-conformity is removed a NCR shall be identified in line with AC procedures and actions taken to identify and address the underlying cause of the failure that led to the appeal.

4. Complaints

Should a client company have any reason to complain regarding the conduct of Advanced Certification Limited employees, then the complaint should be made in writing to Advanced Certification Limited on the complaint form

Should Advanced Certification Limited receive a complaint by a user of a registered client, indicating that a certified client no longer complies with Advanced Certification Limited requirements, then it may be

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necessary to either initiate withdrawal of certification, or conduct a full re audit of the client, at extra cost to the client.

Complainants will receive an acknowledgment of receipt immediately and the complaint will be investigated and decided upon within a maximum of 30 days from initial receipt.

Upon receipt of the completed complaints form, the details will be entered onto the register to enable tracking of the status of the complaint.

Complaints received about a certified client shall be referred to the client in question at a suitable time to enable an effective investigation to take place, confidentiality shall be considered at all stages

All certified clients shall make available, when requested, records of all complaints and corrective actions taken, in accordance with the management system standards or other normative documents.

Initially the completed complaint form, and associated evidence will be investigated by the appointed certificate decision maker(s) and the Advanced Certification Limited audit staff responsible for the client, to determine if the complaint is justified.

If the complaint is deemed to be justified then a NCR shall be identified in line with AC procedures and actions taken to identify and address the underlying cause of the failure that led to the complaint

The results of the complaint investigation process shall be communicated to the complainant without delay, where deemed appropriate the results of the complaint investigation may be made public.