

Appeals and Complaints Handling Procedure

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Purpose

Structure the process of handling complaints and appeals within the organisation



Scope

This procedure is applicable to appeals / complaints received from IGC clients and all interested parties.



Reference

ISO IEC 17021-2015 Certification Bodies Management System



Responsibility

Top Management

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1. Objective

The objective of this procedure is to ensure that:

- Complaints and appeals are properly recorded, investigated and decisions/actions initiated to correct the deficiency.
- Methods including responsibilities are clearly assigned and the complainant/appellant is informed on the action taken.

2. Scope

This procedure shall be applicable to the Certification services offered by IGC. This procedure is applicable to appeals / complaints received from IGC clients and all interested parties.

3. Definitions / abbreviations

As specified in IGC Quality Manual section 3.

4. Responsibility

All relevant functions mentioned in this procedure

Sending Complaints / Appeals: IGC Client, Client's client, other interested party / person

Receiving the complaint / appeal: IGC

Classification (appeal or complaint): IGC

Gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the appeal: IGC

Validation and investigation of complaint: IGC

Communication with complainant: IGC

Validation of Appeal: IGC

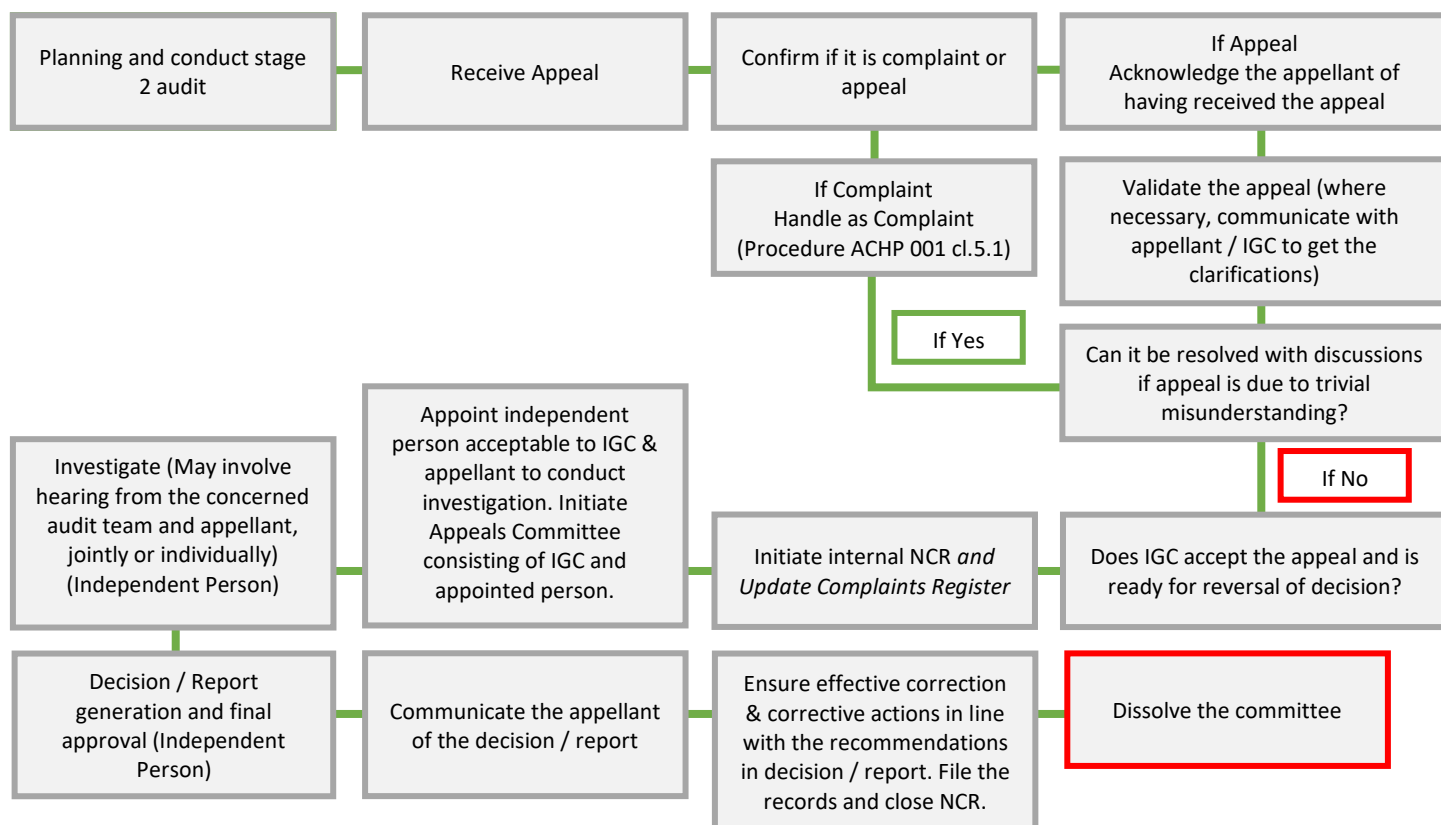
Appoint independent personnel and initiate appeals committee: IGC

Administrative coordination and conduct of investigation of appeal: IGC

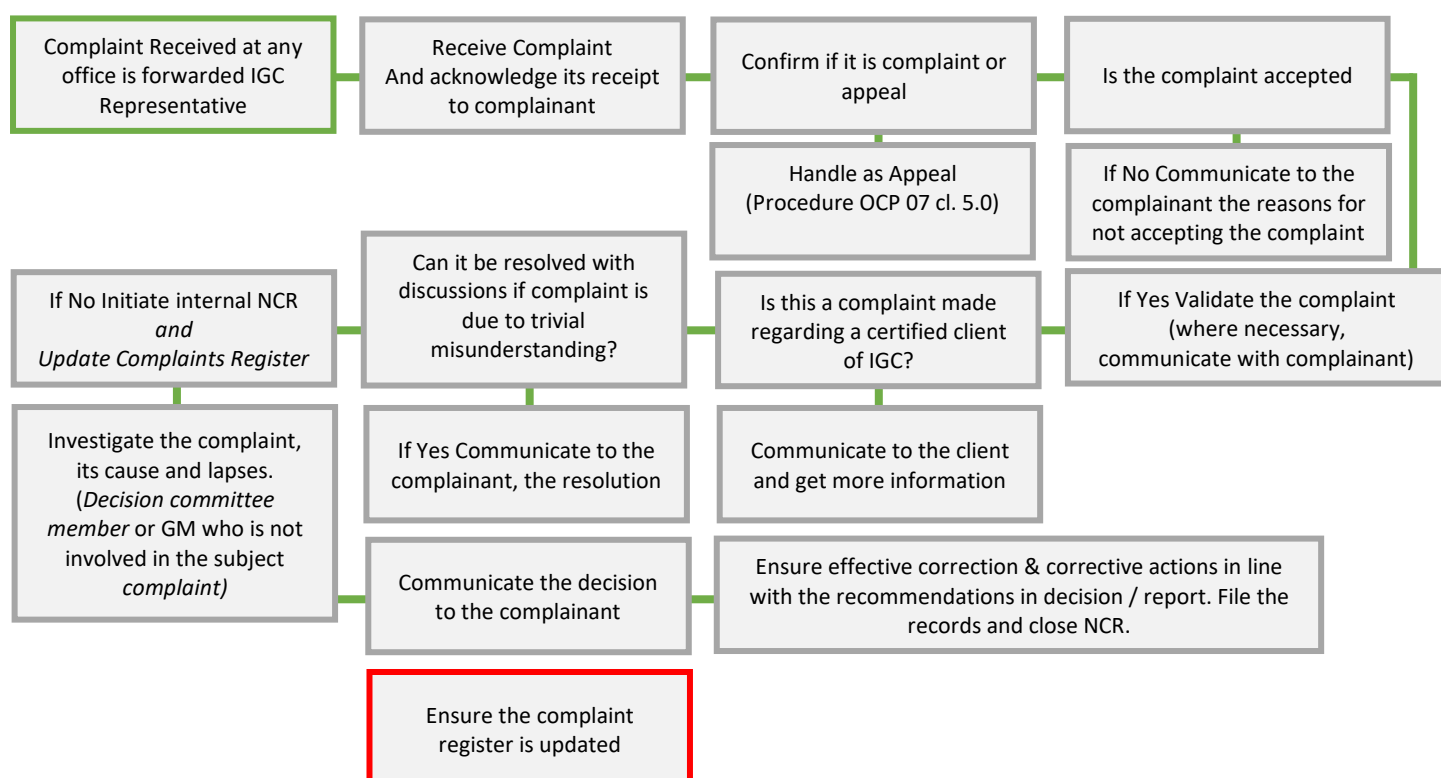
Decision on appeal: By independent personnel

Communication with appellant: IGC

5. Appeals received by IGC will be handled as follows



5.1 Complaints Handling adheres to the following steps



6. Terms of Reference for Appeals Committee:

6.1 Rules for appointment for Appeals Committee:

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

6.1.2 Competence criteria: Knowledge and Experience for the members of Appeals committee:

- LA for one or all schemes of certification offered by IGC. (at least one member should have LA qualification for the scheme in question)
- The composition of the committee should have at least one member with at least 3 years of full time experience of decision making in any stream of services governed by Conformity Assessment standard.
- At least 15 years of experience in industry / academics (If the appeal resolution requires industry specific technical / legal inputs, at least one member should have demonstrated knowledge about the relevant industry sector / law)

6.1.3 Skills:

- Auditing and leading audit teams
- Objective decision making

7. Working Principles:

7.1 Language of working:

English

7.2 Confidentiality

All information and documents gathered during the course of involvement in the committee is understood as confidential. Members sign a confidentiality agreement and acknowledge that IGC is the rightful owner of all confidential information and undertake all necessary and suitable measures to maintain the level of confidentiality. The Board decides on necessary actions in the event of breaches of confidentiality.

7.3 Meetings

The committee meets as required based on the nature of appeal received. There are no regular meetings of the committee as it is constituted only for an appeal received.

7.4 Remuneration:

Members are not provided reimbursement for their time.

Agenda and Correspondence: The sole agenda for the committee is to resolve the appeal made by the client and will be done based on the documents given to them for particular clients. The documents of the client and statements of the auditors concerned will be recorded for the decisions of the committee. The committee can take all the background information of the client as collected by IGC or by itself in resolving the appeal

7.5 Decision-making process

The committee seeks to achieve decisions by consensus. If the CDC feels that consensus is not achievable, it may seek more information from the concerned LA. The decision is postponed till such sought information is made available.

Based on its finding the committee may give any of the following decisions:

- Re-classification of findings during any audit. Any background information supporting the intent of a particular classification.
- Revoking a finding if the committee reaches a conclusion that the finding is unjustified.
- Any other decision related to the audit in question, auditor in question or client in question.

7.6 Records:

The record of the decisions of the committee are maintained by IGC as its property.

8. Notes:

- 8.1** Investigation on a complaint shall not be delayed for more than 3 weeks from the date of receipt of the complaint. Decision on appeal shall not be delayed for more than 3 month from the date of receipt of the appeal.
- 8.2** All verbal complaints received by IGC shall be recorded in the complaint register and treated according to the procedure given above.
- 8.3** The complaint register shall be updated with necessary details regarding the actions taken on the appeal / complaints.
- 8.4** The IGC shall be responsible for all decisions at all levels of the complaints handling process. Submission, investigation and decision on complaints shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the complainant / appellant.
- 8.5** IGC will seek the opinion of the client whose complaint it is dealing, on the extent of publicity given to a particular complaint, however, it will also be governed by any statutory/ regulatory requirements in this case. The decision will be taken by the IGC.
- 8.6** The independent person appointed to investigate the appeal should:
- Be competent in the scheme and sector code for the certification decision against which appeal has been raised,
 - Be independent of the certification process against which appeal has been raised,
 - Sign confidentiality and conflict of interest agreement.
- 8.7** Complaint against certified client: In the event of any valid complaint about a certified client, IGC shall refer to the certified client in question at an appropriate time.



Documents



Revision

Complaint – Appeals register.
ISO-IEC 17021-1
CP001- Certification procedure

Rev. 01 - New Document