PUBLISHED STATEMENT · SOURCE: QP-07

QSI CERT CO · THE PUBLIC FILE

QP-07

Complaints and Appeals Policy.

SOURCE DOCUMENTS	QP-07	DOCUMENT OWNER	QSI CERTIFICATION MANAGEMENT
ISSUE + REVISION	STATED ON THE CONTROLLED ISSUE	APPROVED COPY	FROM QSI ON REQUEST

THIS PAGE IS THE PUBLISHED STATEMENT OF QP-07, COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS, CURRENT REVISION.

CL. 01 Purpose and scope

This document explains how QSI receives, investigates and resolves complaints and appeals. It exists so that anyone who relies on a QSI certificate has a working route to challenge what QSI does.

It covers complaints about QSI itself, its personnel and its decisions; complaints about certified clients, including alleged nonconformity or misuse of certification; and formal appeals by clients against audit findings, auditor conduct or certification decisions.

Complaints are accepted from certified clients, applicants, prospective clients, suppliers, customers of certified clients and any other stakeholder.

CL. 02 How to submit

A complaint, appeal or suggestion may be submitted through any channel: email, telephone, written letter, in person, or the contact form on this website. Describe the issue, name the parties involved and include any reference information available, such as a certificate number, audit date or client name.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT	WITHIN 5 WORKING DAYS
REGISTRATION	LOGGED WITH A UNIQUE CASE NUMBER
STATUS TRACKED	OPEN TO CLOSED, WITH OUTCOME

Complainant identity and contact details are held securely and kept confidential, except where a legal obligation or the investigation itself requires disclosure.

CL. 03 Complaints about QSI

A complaint about QSI is investigated with objectivity toward both the complainant and the person or process complained about. The investigation classifies the issue, interviews the personnel involved, reviews the relevant reports and records, establishes root cause and assesses any impact on certification integrity.

Where a complaint is substantiated, corrective action follows: a procedure amendment where the system failed, or training and personnel action where an individual failed. Findings are reported to the Managing Director and reviewed at management review.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT	WITHIN 5 WORKING DAYS
CLASSIFICATION	WITHIN 3 WORKING DAYS
PERSONNEL INTERVIEWS	WITHIN 5 WORKING DAYS
RECORDS REVIEW	WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS
ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS	WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS
CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN	WITHIN 15 WORKING DAYS
OUTCOME TO COMPLAINANT	WITHIN 20 WORKING DAYS

CL. 04 Complaints about a certified client

A complaint about a certified organisation is first assessed for relevance to the certified scope. Where it relates to certified operations, the audit team lead who knows the file provides context, and the complaint is investigated on evidence.

If the complaint appears valid, the client is notified in writing of the alleged nonconformity. Depending on severity, QSI may schedule a special audit or additional surveillance. A substantiated complaint is addressed as a nonconformity requiring corrective action, and can affect certification status.

- The complainant's identity is protected from the client unless the complainant consents to disclosure.
- The complainant is informed of the outcome without breaching the confidentiality owed to the client.
- An unsubstantiated complaint is documented, closed, and both parties are informed.

RELEVANCE ASSESSMENT	**WITHIN 3 WORKING DAYS**
INVESTIGATION APPROACH SET	**WITHIN 7 WORKING DAYS**
CLIENT NOTIFIED IN WRITING	**WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS**
SPECIAL AUDIT, IF REQUIRED	**WITHIN 30 DAYS**
OUTCOME TO COMPLAINANT	**WITHIN 20 WORKING DAYS**

CL. 05 Appeals: how to appeal

A client may formally appeal an audit finding, a certification decision or the conduct of an auditor. The appeal must be submitted in writing within 30 days of the disputed decision. It must state clearly which finding or decision is being appealed, give specific technical or procedural grounds, and include supporting evidence or argument.

SUBMISSION WINDOW	**30 DAYS FROM THE DECISION**
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	**WITHIN 5 WORKING DAYS**
REGISTRATION	**UNIQUE APPEAL NUMBER ASSIGNED**

CL. 06 Who decides an appeal

Appeals are decided by people who were not involved in the disputed audit or decision. An appeals review committee is appointed, comprising a senior technical person with no involvement in the original audit or decision and, where applicable, a representative of the certification committee.

If the Managing Director took part in the original audit or decision, an external independent committee member leads the appeal review instead.

The committee gathers the complete file, interviews the original audit team, meets the client to hear the appeal argument, and conducts an objective technical review of the disputed finding against the standard. No discriminatory or retaliatory action is taken against any appellant.

CL. 07 Appeal decision and timelines

The committee finds the appeal valid, partially valid or invalid, and records its reasoning in a written decision report with reference to the applicable standard. The decision is communicated to the client in writing by a person not previously involved in the appeal. The decision is final and may not be appealed further within QSI.

COMMITTEE APPOINTED	**WITHIN 3 WORKING DAYS**
AUDIT TEAM INTERVIEWED	**WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS**
CLIENT HEARD	**WITHIN 15 WORKING DAYS**
TECHNICAL EVALUATION	**WITHIN 20 WORKING DAYS**
WRITTEN DECISION	**WITHIN 30 WORKING DAYS**

CL. 08 Closure, learning and oversight

A complaint is closed when the investigation is complete, the complainant has been notified in writing, and any corrective action has been approved and scheduled. Corrective action is then tracked to completion separately, so closing a complaint never hides an open fix.

All complaints and appeals for the year are analysed for trends and reported to management review, so recurring causes drive changes to procedures, auditor training and the system itself.

The handling of complaints and appeals is itself subject to accreditation body oversight as part of QSI's accreditation.

Suggestions for improvement are welcome through the same channels and are answered within 15 working days.

END OF STATEMENT · SOURCE **QP-07**

This page is the published statement of QP-07, current revision, provided for clients and certificate users. The approved issue held in the QSI document control system carries the effective date, revision record and approval details, and governs any specific certificate, complaint, appeal or use-of-mark decision.