



Appeals and Complaints Procedure

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	Issue	Approve	Verify
Position	Quality Manager	Quality Manager	Top Manager
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Date	2022.04.20	2022.04.20	2022.04.20

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1. Purpose:

Provides the means to protect clients and consumers, raising an appeal or complaint against EPIL and acting to resolve them.

2. Responsibility

The quality manager of EPIL is ultimately responsible for communicating an appeal or complaint resolution and disseminating EPIL (and concerning others, stakeholders). The action and decision reside with others; the advisory board supervises the appeals handling processes.

3. Complaints:

Any person/consumer or body can make a complaint against the following:

- i) the CB, its operation and/or procedures
- ii) the auditors, experts, committee members, or staff of the CB
- iii) audit process followed by the auditors and/or by the CB
- iv) misuse of the certified status either in scope or in use of the certification body
- v) logo or certification mark
- vi) quality of certification/inspection
- vii) certified organizations

3.1 The complaint shall be made in writing (by any means such as letter/ email etc.) to the Quality Manager with complete details of the complainant (name, address, organization, etc.) and a description of the complaint with supporting information/documents relevant and necessary.

3.2 The Quality Manager fills out the form CBF-713-01 to document the issue, follow-through action, and record the appeal's communications and actions, including attachments. Form CBF-713-01 provides information and guidance about this procedure and completing the form.


3.3 Any complaint received is reviewed to establish if it is related to EPIL (certificates issued with EPIL). If so, the Quality Manager validates the complaint based on verification of all necessary information gathered, and then the complaint is registered, and the EPIL procedure for handling complaints is followed.

3.4 The Quality Manager will arrange to acknowledge the complaint within **one week** (excluding postal time). If any more information/document is needed, the same shall be sought from the complainant/any other party as decided by the EPIL. If the complaint does not fall under the domain of EPIL, the complainant shall be informed of the same while providing possible assistance, like referring the complaint to the concerned certification body.

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3.5 If the complaint has no details of the complainant or the description is not adequate, the EPIL will reserve the right to deal with the complaint as deemed fit.

3.6 If the complaint is received through another organization/stakeholder, not directly from the complainant, the organization would be briefed on the outcome at the end of the process.

3.7 The decision to be communicated to the complainant will be made /reviewed and approved by individuals not involved in the subject matter of the complaint.

3.8 The Quality Manager will conclude each complaint and initiate appropriate corrective actions if the handling of complaints indicates some issues with EPIL procedures.

3.9 The effectiveness of such actions would be assessed and reported in the Management review meetings. Regarding a complaint against an EPIL applicant, if established, the CB shall take appropriate actions as deemed fit, which may even result in penal actions such as rejection of the application or suspension/withdrawal of certification, etc.

3.10 EPIL will make all efforts to process/resolve the complaint within **1 month** unless it requires more time, depending on the nature of the complaint. EPIL will provide periodic updates on the progress of the complaint investigation and information about its outcome to the complainant.

3.11 EPIL will give the complainant a formal notice at the end of the complaint handling process.


3.12 EPIL will ensure that investigation and decision on complaints do not result in any discriminatory actions

4. Appeals

4.1 Any EPIL applicant can file an appeal against the decision of the CB to the Quality Manager.

4.2 The appeal shall be made in writing (by any means such as letter/ email etc.) to the Quality Manager with complete details of the appeal (name, address, organization, etc.) within thirty days of the CB decision. The Quality Manager fills out the CBF-713-01 to document the issue, follow-through action, and record the appeal's communications and actions, including attachments. Form CBF-713-01 provides information and guidance about this procedure and completing the form.

4.3 The Quality Manager verifies the documents for completeness and may ask for additional information/documents. Once the documents are complete, the Quality Manager validates the appeal based on verification of all necessary information gathered and then acknowledged the appeal's receipt within **a week** and forwards the same to the Top Manager.

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4.4 The Quality Manager consulting with the Top Manager has the right to either disallow the appeal or form an Appeals Committee based on the merit of the contents of the appeal.

4.5 The Top Manager heads the Appeals Committee. A maximum of **two members** out of the quality manager, auditors, project manager, or experts of the CB as permanent members or any other outside members are necessary to discharge the appeal. It would be ensured that the members had not been involved in the subject matter of the appeal.

4.6 The Chair of the Appeals Committee may ask the appellant to present the facts in person to the appeals committee if necessary or desired by the appellant.

4.7 The appeals committee may ask any staff, committee, or empaneled auditors to help discharge the appeal based on facts.

4.8 The Appeals Committee shall recommend necessary action to discharge the appeal to the appellant's satisfaction and the preventive actions that must be taken to avoid such recurrences. The Top Manager will decide on the appeal based on the recommendation by the appeals committee, and the decision of the Top Manager in this regard will be final.

4.9 The Quality Manager shall ensure that appropriate corrective actions are initiated and taken if the handling of appeals indicates some issues with the EPIL procedure.

4.10 EPIL will make all efforts to process/discharge the appeal within 2 months unless it requires more time, depending on the nature of the appeal. EPIL will provide periodic updates on the appeal's progress and information about its outcome to the appellant. The information/records relating to appeals would be maintained.

4.11 EPIL will give the appellant a formal notice at the end of the appeal handling process.

4.12 EPIL will ensure that investigation and appeals decisions do not result in discriminatory actions.

4.13 If the decision is unacceptable to the appellant, an appeal can be made to Accreditation Body as relevant.


5. Financing the Complaint and Appeal Process

If the Complaint or Appeal resolution is made without undertaking any travel or additional assessment, no financing will be needed for such resolutions. The defaulting party will bear the cost if the resolution calls for travel and assessment.

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5.1 Complaints by individual Consumers against a Certified Organization or EPIL

The individual consumer will not be asked to pay for any cost of the resolution of the complaint.

The cost will be financed by any defaulting entities, the Certified organization, or EPIL.

5.2 Complaints or Appeal by a Certified organization against EPIL

In case of such complaints, the body making the complaint, or Appeal, will be asked to give an undertaking that they will provide the cost of travel and related assessment for resolution if their complaint/appeal is dismissed.