

### 0 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE:

The objective of the procedure is to ensure that all activities, which could involve appeals, complaints or disputes, are dealt with in such a manner, that EQCSA can consider legally correct proceedings maintain customer satisfaction, ensure the company image is positively enhanced and interested and affected parties have proof of the professional conduct of EQCSA.

This procedure applies to all matters arising from EQCSA services.

Note: During the procedure Appeals, Complains and Disputes are used as ACD.

This procedure applies to ACD's raised by customers, users of customers certified by EQCSA and interested parties who believe they have reasons for complaint against EQCSA certification matters.

## 1 Registration of ACD

### 1.1 Receiving

An ACD can be received in different forms:

#### 1.1.1 Telephone

The telephonically received ACD is registered by the receiver at EQCSA and documented on the registration form (database). The completed form is returned to the complainant within 24 hrs as confirmation of receipt and processing of the ACD.

#### 1.1.2 E-mail

The e-mail information will be amended by the registration form with reference to the e-mail document. Thereafter both documents are returned to the complainant via e-mail within 24 hrs as confirmation of receipt and processing of the ACD.

### 1.2 Further Communication

Generally, if not otherwise instructed by the investigator, all communication with the complainant shall be within 24 hrs of all new information. It is the basic principle of EQCSA to communicate all matters with the complainant open and direct.

Should, however, during the investigation information become apparent requiring confidentiality, the investigator should use the required discretion to decide on the communication and content with the complainant. Only if all information is preventing misuse and misinterpretation by anyone involved in the ACD, the information can be submitted within the referred time to the complainant.

Should a complaint received by an interested of affected party include matters relating to a certified EQCSA customer, the customer is notified and informed about the content of the complaint within 24 hrs of receipt of the complaint by EQCSA.

**Note: The complainant should be informed that ACD's are only accepted after not more than 30 days between the event leading to reasons for an ACD and the reporting.**

## 2 Processing the ACD

### 2.1 Establishing the Board of Appeal

The Board of Appeal consists of three members, one of whom is elected as a chairperson. The Managing Director of EQCSA selects the Board of Appeal unless the ACD involves the MD as subject of the matter. In this case the other member of the company establishes the Board.

The Board of Appeal consists of the following persons:

- Managing Director (if not subject to complaint)
- Independent Business Partner
- A selected member not involved in the EQCSA business interest and complainant business environment

At least either one of the members must have legal knowledge, certification knowledge and general business knowledge.

### 2.2 Convening the Board of Appeal

With the appointment, the Board of Appeal Chairperson must organize a kick-off meeting, in which it is established that the following questions can be answered:

1. Is impartiality of the Board of Appeal ensured?
2. Is the brief clear to all members of the Board of Appeal?
3. Has it been established what information is required by the board members?
4. Are hearings required and appointments required?
5. Is an independent investigation needed? (i.e. an auditor involved in an audit related complaint cannot be part of the Board or investigation team)
6. Are the lines of communication established?
7. Is the procedure available to the board members?
8. Is the information available to the board members?

### 2.3 Processing the ACD

After the kick-off meeting, the ACD must be processed by the Board of Appeal within 30 days of the kick-off meeting. Any delay cannot be accepted, and should the complainant cause any delay, the complainant is to be informed, that the ACD can be rejected due to lack of interest of the complainant to have the matter resolved adequately.

In this case the complainant is to be informed in writing, that the Board of Appeal has decided that the ACD is to be closed. The decision of the reject due to indicated lack of interest by the complainant must be unanimous. Should only one member have doubts the complainant is to be approached by the Chairperson and other arrangements for ACD processing must be made.

Both EQCSA and the complainant can attend the hearing. An appropriately appointed representative who has the required competence to can represent the parties involved can be used is so decided by the party. The intention of representation must be communicated to the Board of Appeal at least one week prior to the hearing. Failure of notification can lead to postponement or closure of the ACD should the complainant fail to communicate the intent of representation.

The Board of Appeals is to sit for as many sessions as deemed necessary to reach a sound investigation results and judgment.

All information and proceedings are confidential, and no party has the right to disclose any thereof to a third party.

### 2.4 The Judgment

The Board of Appeal is bound by the rules and processes as established by the Manual of EQCSA. Majority votes must support all decisions made.

With the final decision, the Board of Appeal must inform the Managing Director of the results within two weeks of their judgment, should the MD not form part of the Board of Appeal. The MD is responsible for implementing the results of the decision was made by the Board of Appeal and the information of the appellant.

All information of the proceedings is to be recorded and trace able. The judgment of the Board of Appeal is final and not open for further appeal. Any decision regarding a complaint must not result in any discriminatory actions against the complainant or anyone else in the process.

The Chairperson establishes all occurring costs for the proceedings and the responsible parties for payment.

All information related to the raising, investigation and resolution of the ACD remains confidential between the involved parties. All parties shall be informed about the confidentiality in the information and conclusion of the resolution of the ACD. Should there be any need of complaint resolution needed to be made available to the public, the Board of Appeal together with all involved parties to what extend and how publication is made.

**Note: This procedure forms part of the customer information package and it must be ensured, that the customer understands the content thereof.**