



# APPEALS PROCESS

## 1. SCOPE

1.1 Any applicant organisations or client of NQA Certification Limited (NQA) has the right to appeal any decision pertaining to the certification, verification or inspection process conducted by NQA and concerning such applicant organisation or client.

Note 1: Submission, investigation and decision on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory action against the appellant.

Note 2: For the purposes of this appeals procedure, an “Independent Person” means a person who has had no direct involvement with the audit or certification of the relevant appellant in the twelve months prior to the submission of the written appeal including the audit or certification decision that forms the subject of the appeal.

Note 3: NQA are responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the appeal.

1.2 Any investigation shall take into account the results of similar appeals.

## 2. RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Responsibilities are as defined in the text of this Work Procedure.

## 3. APPEALS PROCEDURE

3.1 In the first instance the appellant submits a written appeal to NQA setting out the background to and reasons for the appeal.

3.2 NQA shall log receipt of such appeal, formally confirm receipt of such appeal and provide the appellant with the name(s) of the individual(s) responsible for the investigation and an anticipated timeframe for completion.

3.3 In order to facilitate tracking, each appeal shall be given an individual reference.

3.4 On occasions where the anticipated timeframe for completion is exceeded, the appellant shall be kept updated of progress.

3.5 The individual(s) responsible for the investigation and provisional decision shall (a) be independent persons, and (b) meet all competence criteria as defined by NQA pertaining to the role of Decision Maker in respect of the scheme or schemes to which the appeal relates.

3.6 The outcome of the investigation and provisional decision shall be reviewed and approved by the NQA Operations Manager (or nominated deputy) prior to communication to the appellant. The Operations Manager (or nominated deputy) shall (a) be an Independent person, and (b) have had no prior involvement with the investigation and provisional decision, described in 3.5 above.

- 3.7 In order to ensure impartiality and in addition to the review referred to in 3.6, the outcome of the investigation and provisional decision shall be reviewed by the Independent Certification Board of NQA. As in 3.6, this review shall precede communication of the outcome to the appellant.
- 3.8 The Operations Manager (or nominated deputy) shall be responsible for the initiation, monitoring and 'close -out' of corrective actions identified as being incumbent upon NQA.
- 3.9 Upon completion of the investigation and satisfactory impartiality review, the outcome shall formally be communicated to the appellant.
- 3.10 Upon occasions where the appellant wishes to challenge the decision of the appeals investigation, an additional appeal may be submitted to the Operations Director.
- 3.11 Subject to 3.12 below, the decision of the Operations Director is final and binding upon all parties.
- 3.12 On occasions where the Operations Director is not Independent, the Operations Director shall refer the final decision to the Managing Director or Global Accreditation Director.
- 3.13 Actions incumbent upon any party within this process (both internal and external) shall be completed within 21 working days.

#### **4. RECORDS**

- 4.1 Comprehensive records of the investigation and decision-making processes shall be retained.
- 4.2 Records detailing any corrective actions incumbent upon NQA as a result of a given appeal shall be retained and presented to the Management Review meeting.