



**LMQS-PRO-01**  
**Appeal & Complaint Handling Procedure**



## 1. PURPOSE

To describe the process for receiving, validating, investigating and making decisions on appeals and complaints.

## 2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all LMQS activities associated with system certifications.

## 3. RESPONSIBILITY

Appeal & Complaint Panel, Management Representative (MR), GM & Manager Certification is responsible for effectively implementing the procedure.

## 4. PROCEDURE

### 4.1 Appeal

- 4.1.1 LMQS has a documented process to receive, evaluate and make decisions on appeals as under: Any client or interested parties can make an appeal to LMQS in respect of the following, (a) Non-acceptance of client's application for certification (b) Granting, suspending, withdrawing or denying of certification.
- 4.1.2 In the event of an applicant, certified client or any interested party, wishing to contest any decision of LMQS, he shall, within 14 days after having been officially informed of such a decision, give notice in writing to LMQS of his/her desire to appeal against the decision. The appeal can be received by e-mail, written, verbal.
- 4.1.3 MR will gather and verify all necessary information to validate appeal. The acceptability of the appeal will be determined by the MR on the basis of the evidence received for the same.
- 4.1.4 The receipt of the appeal is acknowledged by MR within 5 working days and the same will be entered in Appeal Form (LMQS-FOR-49).
- 4.1.5 If the appeal is not accepted, MR will notify the appellant the reason for not accepting the same. The appellant will also be given the opportunity to provide additional evidence to support the appeal. The accepted appeal will be forwarded to the General Manager (GM) for further process.
- 4.1.6 On receipt of such appeal, the GM shall advise the Impartiality Committee of the details of the appeal received. The Impartiality Committee will proceed to constitute an independent Appeal Panel. The Appeal Panel will comprise of 3 external members (being independent of LMQS personnel) from Impartial Committee. All members of the Appeal Panel will be independent of the actual issue under consideration.
- 4.1.7 The Appeal Panel meeting will be held within 30 days of the receipt of appeal from appellant and the appellant will be provided with at least 7 clear days of written notice of the time and place of the appeal meeting. Prior to the meeting of the Appeals Panel the existing decision of LMQS is to remain in force.

- 4.1.8 The appellant will have the right to object against the inclusion of any person in the Appeals Panel and the reason for objection should be given in writing to LMQS. It is ensured that personnel engaged in the appeals- handling process are different from those who carried out audits and made the certification decisions.
- 4.1.9 At the Appeals Panel meeting, both the appellant and LMQS representative are entitled to be heard in confidence. The majority decision of the Appeal Panel will be final and conclusive.
- 4.1.10 While taking decision, the results of previous similar appeals are taken into account. LMQS is responsible for all decisions at all levels of the appeals-handling process. The applicant is informed of the progress made and the result of appeal.
- 4.1.11 LMQS ensures through Appeal Panel that the decision to be communicated to the appellant are made by, or reviewed and approved by, individual(s) not previously involved in the subject of the appeal.
- 4.1.12 Submission, investigation and decision on appeals will not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant. This is taken into account by the Appeal Panel for the decisions to be taken.
- 4.1.13 Tracking and recording appeals, including actions/decision undertaken to resolve them are done by MR using Appeal Form (LMQS-FOR-49).
- 4.1.14 Based on the decision of the appeal panel LMQS takes appropriate correction and corrective action.
- 4.1.15 The MR ensure that the appellant is advised in writing of the decision of the Appeals Panel within 7 days of the decision using Appeal Form (LMQS-FOR-49).
- 4.1.16 On conclusion of the appeal, the Manager Certification will also review the grounds of appeal and evaluate if any possible improvements to LMQS's control systems are required.
- 4.1.17 At the end of appeal handling process, a formal notice (email) is given to the appellant by LMQS

## **4.2 Complaint**

- 4.2.1 LMQS responsible for all decisions at all levels of the complaints handling process. MR receiving the complaint will be responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the complaint.
- 4.2.2 Submission, investigation and decision on complaints does not result in any discriminatory actions against the complainant.
- 4.2.3 Upon receipt of a complaint, LMQS confirms whether the complaint relates to certification activities that it is responsible for and, if so, accordingly deals with it. If the complaint relates to a certified client, then examination of the complaint considers the effectiveness of the certified management system.
- 4.2.4 Any valid complaint about a certified client will be referred by the LMQS to the certified client in question at an appropriate time.

- 4.2.5 The complaints received are recorded in Complaint Form (LMQS-FOR-60) with its nature and the receipt of complaint is acknowledged to the complainant. The MR reviews the complaint to ascertain the seriousness and the genuineness of the complaint.
- 4.2.6 LMQS provides the complainant with progress reports and the result of the complaint.
- 4.2.7 The complaint and complaint handling process are subjected to requirement for confidentiality as it relates to the complainant and to the subject of the complaint.

#### **4.2.8 Complaint Handling Process**

##### **4.2.8.1 Complaints about LMQS certification activities**

- (a) Depending on the nature of the complaint, Manager Certification decides to conduct the investigation himself or advise the Impartiality Committee of the details of the complaint received. The Impartiality Committee will proceed to constitute an independent Complaint Panel. The Complaint Panel will comprise of 3 external members (being independent of LMQS personnel) from Impartiality Committee. All members of the Complaint Panel will be independent of the actual issue under consideration.
- (b) The complaint panel will be investigating the complaint by looking into the records and / or talking to the complainant and LMQS and takes a decision taking into account the results of any previous such complaints.
- (c) The details of investigation and the correction and the corrective actions identified are recorded in the Complaint Form (LMQS-FOR-60). Upon verification on the effectiveness of corrective action taken, LMQS informs the complainant about the correction and corrective action taken and if the complainant is satisfied with the actions taken the complaint is treated as closed

##### **4.2.8.2 Complaints about a certified client**

- (a) LMQS inform the client about the complaint received and ask the client to investigate the complaint and report the findings to LMQS within two weeks from the date of receiving the complaint by the client.
  - (b) If LMQS does not receive any response from the client or the action taken by the client is not found effective, LMQS informs the client accordingly and ask for a special audit at the client site by LMQS. On confirmation from the client LMQS conducts a special audit and investigate the complaint.
  - (c) If the complaint is of serious nature LMQS initiates the special audit directly with the client.
  - (d) As its policy, LMQS does not disclose the identity of the complainant to the client.
  - (e) If any action is needed to be taken by the client LMQS verifies the effectiveness of such action by suitable means appropriate to the gravity of the problem.
  - (f) If the corrective action taken by the client is found effective LMQS informs the complainant accordingly and the complaint will be treated as closed.
- 4.2.9 Unsatisfactory performance recorded on the "Client Feedback Form (LMQS-FOR-15)" by any LMQS client in respect of the audit conducted by LMQS auditors will be treated as a complaint.

- 4.2.10 The tracking and recording complaints, including actions undertaken in response to them is maintained by MR in Complaint Form (LMQS-FOR-60)
- 4.2.11 LMQS will determine, together with the certified client and the complainant, whether and, if so to what extent, the subject of the complaint and its resolution shall be made public.
- 4.2.12 The decision to be communicated to the complainant is made by, or reviewed and approve by individuals not previously involved in the subject of the complaint.
- 4.2.13 Whenever possible, LMQS give formal notice(email) of the end of the complaints handling process to the complainant.

### 4.3 Client Feedback

- 4.3.1 Upon completion of audit **Client Feedback Form (LMQS-FOR-15)** will be forwarded to the client by MR, for obtaining their valuable feedback
- 4.3.2 The client feedback received will be reviewed by the Manager Certification
- 4.3.3 The results of evaluation gained shall be used to make improvements in areas where the performance is average and unsatisfactory, while striving at the same time to maintain the excellent performance and excel in areas where performance is good.
- 4.3.4 The results of Customer Evaluation and follow up measures will be compiled by the Management Representative and discussed in the Management Review meetings.

## 5. RELATED FORMS

Doc ID	Document Title	Retention Period
LMQS-FOR-49	Appeal Form	6 Years
LMQS-FOR-60	Complaint Form	6 Years
LMQS-FOR-15	Client Feedback Form	6 Years