

1.0 Policy and purpose

Policy

The Certification Body is committed to a fair appeals and complaints process for any applicant, candidate or certified person with any adverse outcome of a decision. A description of the process will be publicly accessible on the Certification Body's (CB) website.

Note: The scope of this document does not cover employment disputes.

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to describe the required mechanisms to ensure compliance with ISO/IEC 17024:2012, clause 9.8 – Appeals against decisions on certification and clause 9.9 Complaints.

In addition, to ensure compliance with the Operational Requirements Document, a complaint investigation must be conducted to ascertain whether:

- certificated person has failed to apply or maintain their competence and or
 - approved AC has been involved with malpractice or maladministration or otherwise and
- or
- a complaint is justified

The outputs from this procedure provide an input to PP-11 Management Reviews to comply with ISO/IEC 17024:2012 clause 10.2.5.2.

Further details can be found in WI-10-01 Complaints and appeals

2.0 Procedure

2.1 Complaints

Candidates shall exhaust the assessment centres own complaints procedure where the complaint relates to centre conduct/performance if the outcome is then felt by the complainant to not have been properly addressed then it should be escalated to AdSkills Certification in writing giving reasons for the complaint and outlining the expected outcome/resolution.

Complaints directly relating to personnel, conduct etc must initially be addressed to the Scheme Manager, again outlining the reasons and required outcome/resolution if the complaint is regarding the Scheme Manager then the complaint should be marked for the attention of The Impartiality Committee.

The CB will confirm receipt of the complaint detailing:

- The CB standards of service for conducting the investigation
- Name and contact details of the person carrying out the investigation

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- Where possible an estimated date for reporting its findings and any actions.

The designated person(s) carrying out the investigation will:

- Review all relevant application, examination and assessment documentation completed by the certificated person named in the complaint.
- Conduct (and make a record of) interview(s) with AC staff involved in the certification process.
- Conduct (and make a record of) an interview with the person named in the complaint.
- Where appropriate obtain (and record) evidence from other witnesses and or persons relevant to the complaint e.g. Gas Safe Register inspector, customer etc.

The designated person carrying out the investigation will make any decision based on objective evidence only.

Resolution of complaints will be in writing detailing the decision and the reasons for it, the complainant will be kept apprised of the progress of the investigation etc, the CB will endeavour to resolve complaints in a timely and efficient manner.

2.2 Appeals

AdSkills Certification is committed to a fair appeal process for any applicant, candidate, or certified person with any adverse outcome of a decision related to the following:

- The assessment centres recommendation to not certificate
- AdSkills decision to not certificate
- AdSkills decision to withdraw or suspend certification
- The outcome of a complaint against AdSkills
- Request for corrective actions

The appeals process will be outlined in the scheme rules for applicants / candidates and certificate holder.

Where a written appeal is received in accordance with the appeals procedure detailed in the scheme rules for candidates/applicants, it will be logged on the appeals/complaints register by the receiving member of staff.

Acknowledgement of receipt will be sent either post or email in line with the standards of service below

The details will then be passed to the designated person for review who will then as appropriate:

- Request additional information from the appellant
- Request information from the assessment centre concerned in the assessment
- Review the certification decision

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Based on the objective evidence available the designated person will then either:

- Uphold the decision and inform the appellant in writing as to the reasons and also outline the process to have the decision reviewed by the impartiality committee.
- Overturn the decision inform the appellant in writing and start an internal review of the process failure that caused the appeal.
- Where it is necessary to have the appeal heard by the impartiality committee, then the committee members will be contacted and where necessary a hearing date for an appeal panel as per the terms of reference for the impartiality committee shall be agreed.
- At all points in the process the appellant shall be kept fully informed.

At the end of the process the outcome will be logged, and the appeal/complaint listed as closed.

The records will be kept for a minimum of 6 years and the retention period will be recorded in the Document retention checklist.

3.0 Standards of service

The standards of service covering appeals and complaints are covered in AdSkills Quality Manual, Appendix 4 – Quality policy

Should it be necessary due to collection of evidence etc to go beyond the times stated then the individuals concerned will be kept appraised at bi-weekly intervals as to the status of the complaint / appeal.