

# UNITED ACCREDITATION FOUNDATION



## PROCEDURE

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| Document Name   | PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS, APPEALS AND DISPUTES |
| Document Number | UAF-PR-06                                                  |
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| Revision Date   | JUL-19-2024                                                |
| Effective Date  | JUL-19-2024                                                |

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## 1. OBJECTIVE

To ensure that UAF has a documented process to receive, evaluate and make decisions on complaints, appeals and disputes.

## 2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This procedure applies to the feedback, including any complaint/dispute/appeal received by UAF against the following:
  - 2.1.1 The UAF Board, its operation and procedures
  - 2.1.2 UAF Accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies
  - 2.1.3 Client certified by UAF Accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies
  - 2.1.4 The UAF Accreditation Personnel.
  - 2.1.5 UAF Accreditation Process.
  - 2.1.6 The misuse of the accredited status by any Accredited CAB.
  - 2.1.7 The quality of certification / Testing/Inspection
  - 2.1.8 Any other UAF-related matter.
- 2.2 UAF aims to deal with users in a fair and equal manner, without any preference or prejudice towards them; however, UAF does not tolerate persistent, unreasonable or hostile behavior from complainants/enquirers. If it occurs, the necessary action(s) will be taken to protect the wellbeing of our personnel, the integrity of our processes, and our reputation.

## 3. RESPONSIBILITY

Senior Manager Accreditation & Manager Accreditation are responsible for establishing, maintaining and implementing this procedure.

## 4. REFERENCES

- ISO/IEC 17011:2017
- IAF QMS-004:2023
- Complaint/appeal Investigation progress sheet UAF –F-015
- Complaint/appeal registration record UAF-F-015A
- Complaint/appeal Register UAF-F-16

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## 5. PROCEDURE

### 5.1 Complaints

1. The procedure for handling complaints is available to any interested party of UAF on its official website.
2. Any person or body can make a complaint against the following:
  - a. The UAF Board, its operation and procedures
  - b. UAF Accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies
  - c. Client certified by UAF Accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies
  - d. The UAF accreditation personnel's
  - e. UAF Accreditation process.
  - f. Mislead accredited status by any Accredited CAB.
  - g. The quality of certification /Testing/Inspection
  - h. Any other UAF-related matter.
3. The Complainant shall submit the complaint by email or any other written means with all the necessary identification details of the Complainant (name, address, organization). The Manager/ Senior Executive shall acknowledge the complaint related to accreditation activities within one week by email or post (excluding postal time) with brief details on the approach and approximate time required to address the complaint.
4. Complaint with incomplete details of the claimant or the description doesn't have enough information, and the Senior Manager will decide regarding acceptance and registration of complaint.
5. The Manager Accreditation will be responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the complaint and deciding what actions are to be taken in response to it with relevant personnel.
6. The decision will be communicated to the Complainant, which is made by, or reviewed and approved by, individual(s) not involved in the activities.



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7. If the complaint pertains to a client of an accredited CAB, the complaint would be referred to the accredited CAB for possible resolution. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the response of the Conformity Assessment Body, the complaint will be taken up further.
8. The Manager will give formal notice of the end of the complaint handling process to the Complainant.
9. UAF is responsible for all decisions at all levels of the handling process for complaints and ensures that investigation and decisions on complaints will not result in any discriminatory actions against the Complainant.
10. The Senior Manager will follow each complaint to the conclusion, ensuring that any appropriate action is taken on time and takes preventive actions.
11. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the decision, They may request to reopen the complaint to justify reopening. The Senior Manager's decision for reopening will be final.
12. The timeframe for handling complaints is detailed as below:
  - 12.1 Acknowledgment of the complaint to the Complainant – one week
  - 12.2 Appointment of Investigating assessor – within one week from registration.
  - 12.3 Coordinating and forwarding for each activity/information – within one week from the date of receipt of information/ execution of the activity.
  - 12.4 Investigation period – depending on the nature of the investigation.
  - 12.5 Investigation report writing – within ten working days from the date of completion of the investigation
  - 12.6 Updating of Complaint/appeal investigation sheet UAF-F-15 – within three days from the completion of the activity.
  - 12.7 Conclusive information is given to the Complainant - within three days from the completion of the investigation report
13. If UAF receives an inquiry or complaint that is deemed to be unreasonable, persistent, or hostile, the matter will be referred to the UAF Impartiality Committee for their consideration and recommendation. The Impartiality Committee's recommendation shall be passed to the UAF Board for their decision. The decision of the Board will be sent to the inquirer/complainant

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within 10 working days, noting their behavior and explaining why it is considered unacceptable. The Board's decision will be final.

## 5.2 Appeals

1. The procedure for handling the process for appeals is available to all clients of UAF on its official website.
2. Any CAB aggrieved by the decision of UAF can file an appeal against the decision.
3. The appeal must be filed in writing or by email within thirty days of the decision and all the necessary documents supporting the appeal.
4. The Manager verifies the documents for completeness and may ask for additional documentary support if necessary. Once the documents are complete, the Manager or their delegate acknowledges the receipt of the appeal and forwards the same to the Senior Manager. The Senior Manager has the right to either disallow the appeal or form an Appeal Committee based on the merit of the contents of the appeal.
5. The Appeal committee is headed by one of the board members/directors nominated by Director Accreditation. The nominated head of the Appeal Committee is allowed to take two members as a permanent member. It is also allowed to invite other outside members as necessary to discharge the appeal. It would be ensured that the members had not been involved in the subject matter of the appeal and the investigation and decision do not result in any discriminatory action.
6. The appellant may be asked to be present by the head of the committee or if so desired, by the appellant.
7. The appeal committee may ask any of the staff, committee or empaneled assessors and staff for the facts.
8. The Appeal committee recommends the Director Accreditation for necessary action to discharge the appeal to the appellant's satisfaction and the preventive actions that must be taken to avoid such recurrences. The Director Accreditation will decide on the appeal based on the recommendation by the

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appeals committee. The decision will be communicated to the appellant. The decision of the Director Accreditation in this regard will be final.

9. The Manager will acknowledge receipt of the appeal and provide the appellant with progress reports and the outcome. And also gives formal notice of the end of the appeals handling process to the appellant.
10. UAF shall be responsible for all decisions at all levels of the handling process for appeals.
11. The timeframe for handling appeals is detailed as below:
  - a) Acknowledgment of the appeal to the appellant – one week
  - b) Appointment of appeal committee – within one week from the date of registration
  - c) Coordinating and forwarding for each activity/information – within one week from the date of receipt of information/ execution of activity
  - d) Appeal committee decision – within six weeks after receipt of all the information from the stakeholders
  - e) Updating of Complaint/appeal investigation sheet UAF-F-15 – within three days from the completion of the activity
  - f) The decision to the appellant - within three days after the decision is made

### **5.3 Disputes**

1. The disputes shall be submitted in writing, along with the details on the issue with the supporting documents. A dispute may differ between UAF and a CAB or within UAF itself, but the two parties' actions should be shrouded in the Dispute.
2. The Accreditation Manager will decide about the acceptance of the Dispute and intimate the maximum time limit to fix the Dispute.
3. The decision/conclusion of the Dispute is dispatched to Senior Manager.
4. The Senior Manager will then inform the associated person or body of the final decision on the Dispute.

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#### **5.4 Financing the Complaint, Appeal and Dispute Process**

The man-days involved in resolving the complaint and attorney charges may be levied to CAB depending upon the situation as decided by the Senior Manager.

If the investigation requires travel, the defaulting party will endure the expenditure.

#### **5.5 Complaints by Individual Consumers against a Conformity Assessment Body**

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 entity, the Conformity Assessment Body or UAF.

#### **5.6 Complaints, Disputes or Appeals by a Conformity Assessment Body against the Conformity Assessment Body**

If the body lodges the Complaint, Dispute or Appeal, it agrees to provide the travel and assessment related value for resolution if their complaint/dispute/appeal is dispersed. Complaint against a CAB, the associated CAB is also asked to provide the travel and assessment cost if the decision is against them.