

**APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS****1. Objective**

The procedure below provides the MSS Global recognised approach to handling appeals and complaints concerning the management system certification activities undertaken, including complaints and disputes relating to certificated organisations.

Clients and users of certification can expect to have complaints **and appeals** investigated, and if determined to be valid, have confidence that **they** will be appropriately addressed, and that a reasonable effort will be made to resolve the complaint.

Submission, investigation and decision on complaints and appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the complainant.

**2. Definitions**

**Appeal:** A stated disagreement with the decision(s) of MSS Global covering both disputes and complaints.

**Complaint:** A negative expression by an organisation or other interested party concerning the certification performance, procedures and/or policy activities of MSS Global, employees working for MSS Global, or the organisations certified by MSS Global and/or their activities within the scope of the MSS Global awarded certificates.

**3. Application****3.1. Complaints & Appeals Concerning Management System Certification Activities**

Complaints or appeals concerning the certification activities, written reports, conduct, or make up of MSS Global audit teams or audit scope can be submitted through number of routes:

1. To MSS Global in writing or orally (see website for contact details)
2. To the MSS Global Impartiality Committee (contact details are within client contracts)
3. To the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS)

Any time related charges beyond the time of MSS Global employees for investigation using avenues 2 and 3 will be paid for by the complainant (eg UKAS incurred costs etc).

Complaints and appeals will be forwarded to, and recorded by the Operations Manager, or in their absence, the Performance Director; they in turn will inform the Impartiality Committee. It is important that the person reviewing the complaint or appeal is outwith the activity that generated the complaint or appeal (for example: auditor and Operations Manager).

Complaints or appeals received by MSS Global are to be considered within seven (7) working days. The appellant or complainant will be informed in writing of the evaluation process. The Operations Manager may submit a complaint to Complaint Evaluation Committee if considered appropriate; the Impartiality Committee may be drawn upon as part of this process, or as a minimum, brought up to date through the periodic Impartiality Committee meetings and operational updates.

Depending on where the complaint or appeal is considered (Performance Director or Complaint Evaluation Committee), they will determine what, if any, corrective and preventative measures are necessary; this may include the need for legal and insurance support if sufficiently complex. Whenever possible, MSS Global shall give formal notice of the end of the complaints or appeals handling process to the complainant/appellant. MSS Global shall determine, together with the

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client and the complainant, whether and, if so to what extent, the subject of the complaint and its resolution shall be made public.

**3.2. Complaints Concerning Certificated Organisations**

All complaints may be submitted to MSS Global either in writing or verbally; these may be submitted in person, letter, email, or website. All complaints will then be captured and forwarded to Operations Manager by the person who receives the complaint.

Complaints arising from non-conformities or deficiencies in the management system of the certified organisation are to be forwarded in writing by the Operations Manager to the appropriate organisation for a response. They will be requested by MSS Global to respond in a timely manner; this response is to include any mitigation or intervention actions.

Depending on the severity of the complaint allegations, the MSS Global Operations Manager, in consultation with the Performance Director or MD may direct a short notice audit of the certificated organisation. For less severe allegations, the alternative may be for MSS auditors to consciously assess the issue at the next scheduled audit. All corrective and preventative actions will be checked thereafter. The certified organisations response will be forwarded to the complainant.

**3.3. Appeals Against the Management System Certification Decision**

The MSS Global CM will gather and verify all necessary information to validate the appeal. While arbitration and mediation will always be a first resort, the organisation seeking certification may appeal to MSS Global Impartiality Committee, or the Accreditation Service (UKAS), or resort to legal action if they fundamentally disagree with MSS Global's certification decision. Where MSS Global receives a notice of appeal against its decision, the appellant will be informed that they can escalate the appeal to a higher level.

**3.4. Informing Related Parties**

All complaints, appeals and disputes received by MSS Global are handled in strict confidence and will never communicated to third parties. If it is considered necessary, only the MSS Global Impartiality Committee and UKAS, as MSS Global's accreditation body will be informed.