

# COMPLAINTS & APPEALS

## CQP-08



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## 1. Objective

This document is intended to establish the procedures describing the processing steps for:

- Calls made by stakeholders against a certification decision by COMPLIA.
- Complaints and Appeals.

It also describes related responsibilities.

## 2. Scope

This procedure applies to all stakeholders having appealed or against a decision of COMPLIA, regarding certification.

For complaints, it applies to:

- Clients having made complaints against COMPLIA that involve the certification process or honesty and competence of the Certification Division staff.
- Beneficiaries of certificates of conformity which contest the quality of the product certified by COMPLIA.

## 3. Responsibilities

- 3.1. The Head of Certification Division (HCD) is responsible for confirming a valid appeal/ complaint and providing technical advice to the Quality Assurance Manager as and when required.
- 3.2. The Quality Assurance Manager is responsible for conducting investigations, taking technical advice from the Technical Team or the HCD, and approving the decision/ recommendation(s) of the appeals and complaints.
- 3.3. Any internal personnel of the Certification Division of COMPLIA is responsible for recording the details of complaint(s) received and forwarding the relevant information to the Quality Assurance Manager
- 3.4. The claimant (or appellant) is responsible for initiating any appeal/ complaint about the COMPLIA certification service, and feedback for the outcome(s) from COMPLIA, per the defined time frame(s).

## 4. Work Procedure

### 4.1. Appeals

#### 4.1.1. Receiving an Appeal

- 4.1.1.1. Any organization or individual that contracted with COMPLIA for product certification can contest a certification decision of COMPLIA (e.g. refusal to issue a certificate of conformity).
- 4.1.1.2. Any appeal/objection must be made in a period not exceeding 15 days from the date of certification decision, and specified in the Certification Agreement.
- 4.1.1.3. Upon reception of an appeal via email on [feedback@complia.services](mailto:feedback@complia.services) by any internal personnel, the relevant information is recorded on the CQF-03 Complaints and Appeal form by the appellant, the HCD ensures the admissibility of the appeal by:
  - Confirming whether the appeal is related to the COMPLIA certification activities.
  - Checking whether the appeal has been sent before the expiration of 15 days.
  - Ensure that the person appealing is authorized by the appellant, or has the respective
  - e right for appealing.
  - Ensure that the argument(s) of the appeal is found and confirmed.
- 4.1.1.4. If the eligibility requirements are not all met, the appeal may be dismissed. The HCD informs the Quality Assurance Manager of this decision within 3 working days following the reception of the appeal.

- 4.1.1.5. If the appeal is admitted by HCD, the HCD sends a copy of the appeal to the Quality Assurance Manager within 1 working day.
- 4.1.1.6. The Quality Assurance Manager sends a confirmation of reception by email to the appellant and informs them that COMPLIA will examine their appeal, within 3 working days following the reception of the appeal by HCD.
- 4.1.1.7. The Quality Assurance Manager saves the appeal information to CQF-42 Complaints and Appeal Register, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- Complaint (or appeal) ID
  - The claimant/ appellant's name and contact details
  - Date of receipt
  - Type of the incident (complaint or appeal)
  - Description (brief) of incident
  - Due date for decision
  - CPA (Corrective and Preventive Action) case ID assigned for the follow-up as applicable
- 4.1.1.8. The Quality Assurance Manager stores the relevant documents, communication and records in the case folder named with the Complaints and Appeals ID in the Complaints and Appeals folder of Internal Record.
- 4.1.2. Personnel responsible for Appeal Investigation
- 4.1.2.1. The Quality Assurance Manager is in charge of coordinating the investigation.
- Person(s) from the "Technical Team" but different from those who made the review and/or decision for the same file may provide technical advice to the Quality Assurance Manager
  - The Quality Assurance Manager, may select a person from COMPLIA different from those who made the review and/or decision for the same file or not belonging to COMPLIA (but having no lower skills than the "Technical Team") whose appointment must be confirmed and approved by HCD.
- 4.1.2.2. The Quality Assurance Manager must verify that there is no conflict of interest. He must especially verify that personnel who have provided consultancy for a client (previously), or been employed by a client (previously), are not used to review or approve the resolution of an appeal for that client (within two years following the end of the consultancy or employment).
- 4.1.2.3. The appellant may withdraw the appeal at any time before the commencement of the investigations. In this case, the appeal cannot be reinstated if it is founded on the same reasons.
- 4.1.3. Conduct of Meetings of the Responsible Personnel
- 4.1.3.1. The Quality Assurance Manager conducts the investigation. The Quality Assurance Manager may consult the Technical Team or the HCD for technical investigation if needed.
- 4.1.3.2. Following the investigation, the Quality Assurance Manager reaches a decision and/or recommendation(s).
- 4.1.3.3. All available documentation is reviewed by the Quality Assurance Manager before the decision/recommendation(s).
- 4.1.4. Decision Making
- 4.1.4.1. When making a decision, the Quality Assurance Manager must take into account the results of previous certification decisions.

4.1.4.2. The Quality Assurance Manager may recommend the amendment of a procedure, regulation, or other internal document of the COMPLIA to the HCD.

- In the case where the HCD does not agree with the recommendation(s) of the Quality Assurance Manager, the HCD shall respond within 1 working day with documented appropriate reason(s) to the Quality Assurance Manager for their re-consideration.

4.1.4.3. Once the decision/recommendation(s) is finalized and confirmed, the Quality Assurance Manager notifies the appellant on the decision by an email.

- The decision is irrevocable.
- Total time between confirmation of eligibility of appeal and informing appellant about the decision cannot be more than 2 weeks following the reception of the appeal.

4.1.4.4. The Quality Assurance Manager monitors the implementation of the recommended action(s), if any, in accordance with the CQP-13 Corrective and Preventive Actions.

#### 4.1.5. Limitation

During the appeal process, the personnel responsible for the Appeal Investigation shall not violate any rules and requirements as outlined in the Quality Manual, including, but not limited to, confidentiality and impartiality.

## 4.2. Complaints

### 4.2.1. Definition of the Complaint

A complaint is a registered observation (negative), received at COMPLIA that concerns the certification process or honesty and/or competence of the Certification Division staff.

- The complaint must be made within 15 days following the events having been generated.
- It can also affect the compliance or integrity of a client of COMPLIA.

### 4.2.2. Receipt and Registration of a Complaint

4.2.2.1. Upon reception of a complaint via email on [feedback@complia.services](mailto:feedback@complia.services) by any internal personnel, the relevant information is recorded on the CQF-03 Complaints and Appeal form and forwarded to the relevant Team manager/ leader for the preliminary review within two(2) working days.

4.2.2.2. The relevant Team manager/ leader reviews the case preliminarily & justifies its validity, and provides feedback within 2 working days following the reception of the complaint.

- If the validity is not confirmed, the relevant Team manager/ leader informs the claimant, by email, of the rejection of the complaint with the corresponding reason(s), if applicable.
- If the validity is confirmed, the relevant Team manager/ leader forwards the relevant information to the Quality Assurance Manager to follow-up.

4.2.2.3. Upon reception of the complaint information the Quality Assurance Manager reviews and confirms whether the complaint relates to COMPLIA's certification activities and the valid period for the complaint, if so, address it.

- If no, the Quality Assurance Manager after discussing with the relevant Team manager/ leader informs the claimant, by email, of the rejection of the complaint with the corresponding reason(s), if applicable, within 2 working days following the reception of the complaint.

4.2.2.4. If the validity of the complaint is confirmed, the Quality Assurance Manager acknowledges the receipt of the complaint to the claimant, by email, within 2 working days following reception of the complaint.

4.2.2.5. Quality Assurance Manager saves the information of the complaint to CQF-42 Complaints and Appeal Register that includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Complaint (or appeal) case ID
- The claimant (or caller) name and contact details
- Date of receipt
- Type of the incident (complaint or appeal)
- Description (brief) of incident
- Due date for decision
- CPA case ID assigned for the follow-up as applicable

4.2.2.6. The Quality Assurance Manager stores the relevant documents, communication, and materials in the case folder named with the case ID in the Complaints and Appeals folder of Internal Record.

#### 4.2.3. Treatment and Investigation of the Complaint

4.2.3.1. The Quality Assurance Manager investigates the case within 6 working days following the acknowledgment of the complaint.

4.2.3.2. The Quality Assurance Manager must verify that there is no conflict of interest.

- They must especially verify that personnel who have provided consultancy for a client (previously), or been employed by a client (previously), are not used to review or approve the resolution of complaint for that client (within two years following the end of the consultancy or employment).
- The review and decision on a complaint is made by personnel who have not previously been involved in the file.

4.2.3.3. The Quality Assurance Manager is granted access rights to the available information for the investigation.

4.2.3.4. The complaint is examined from the perspective of compliance of the certified product. The Quality Assurance Manager may consult the members of the Certification Division or the HCD during the investigation.

#### 4.2.4. Decision Making

4.2.4.1. The Quality Assurance Manager gathers the details of the investigation, the possible cause(s), a corrective action proposed, and the decision of the complaint as applicable within 10 working days following the investigation appointment.

4.2.4.2. Following the decision on the complaint, the Quality Assurance Manager informs the claimant that their complaint has been considered and treated, within 20 working days following the acknowledgment of the complaint. No further information can be provided to the claimant if it does not respect the confidentiality agreement between COMPLIA and its client.

4.2.4.3. The Quality Assurance Manager monitors any action(s), if any, in accordance to the Corrective and Preventive Actions.

### 5. Relevant Documents

5.1. ISO/IEC 17065

5.2. CQM-01 Quality Manual

5.3. CQP-13 Corrective and Preventive Actions

### 6. Relevant Records

6.1. CQF-42 Complaints and Appeal Register

6.2. CQF-32 Minutes of Meeting

CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Chapter Point	Page	Change Introduction	Approval/ Effective Date
1.0	/	/	First version	Prashant Vishwakarma/ 30 Dec 2024

