

LMS Assessment Services Private Limited/ LMS Assessments Limited		Operational Procedure Manual	
Section Name	Procedure for Resolution of Appeal, Complaints and Disputes		
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Procedures for Resolution of Appeal, Complaints and Disputes

1.0 Purpose:

To document, establish, implement and maintain the system for addressing Appeal, Complaints and Disputes received by LMS as per requirements ISO/IEC ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, & ISO 17021-2:2016, 17021-3:2017, ISO 17021-10:2018, ISO 17021-9:2016, ISO 22003-1:2022, ISO 27006:2015, ISO 50003:2021, MD 9:2022 and other applicable international standards for certification bodies offering management system certifications

2.0. Scope:

This procedure is applicable to all appeal, complaints and disputes received by LMS related to its Management System Certification.

2.0 Responsibility:

Managing Director

3.0 Procedure:

4.1 Appeals

4.1.1 Any client shall make an appeal to the managing director of LMS 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 LMS records all appeals in document LMS-FM-054 and acknowledges the receipt of the appeal. All appeals shall be addressed within 30 working days from the receipt of the appeal and LMS provides the client with progress reports and the outcome.

4.1.3 All appeals are reviewed by the appeal panel constituted by managing director for each appeal. The appeal panel shall contain at least two members from the LMS's auditor panel who have not been part of the audit and also not involved in certification decision or involved in the subject of the appeal. For appeal against the decision of the Managing Director the matter shall be referred to the chairman of the impartial committee for constituting the panel and taking the decision.

4.1.4 The appeal panel shall investigate the appeal by looking into the records and / or talking to the appellant and LMS and shall take a decision taking into account the results of any previous such appeals.

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4.1.5 Based on the decision of the appeal panel LMS initiates appropriate correction and corrective action and the same recorded in LMS-FM-058, register for complaints, appeals & disputes.

4.1.6 LMS is responsible for all decisions at all levels of the appeal handling process. The decision on the appeal is reviewed and approved by managing director and is communicated to the client. This completes the appeal process and LMS is also inform the appellant at this time about the closure of the appeal.

4.1.7 LMS ensures that the submission, investigation and decision on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory action against the appellant.

4.1.8 The right of the client to appeal against any decision by LMS is communicated at the time of sending the quotation through document PD-02.

4.1.9 Information about appeal handling process of LMS is made publicly available through web site and / or document PD-02

4.1.10 The LMS while receiving the appeal is, responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the appeal.

4.1.11 The decision to be communicated to the appellant shall be made by, or reviewed and approved by, LMS individual(s) not previously involved in the subject of the appeal.

4.1.12 The LMS shall give formal notice to the appellant of the end of the appeals handling process.

4.2 Complaints

4.2.1 Information about complaint handling process of LMS is made publicly available through web site and / or document PD-02. *The complaints handling process includes the following*

An outline of the process for receiving, validating, investigating the complaint and for deciding what actions to be taken in response to it.

The Managing Director is responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the complaint.

4.2.1-a) The LMS is to be responsible for all decisions at all levels of the complaints handling process.

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

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4.2.1.-c) any valid complaint about a certified client shall also be referred by the LMS to the certified client in question at an appropriate time.

4.2.1-d) The complaints-handling process shall include at least the following elements and methods:

- a) an outline of the process for receiving, validating, investigating the complaint, and for deciding what actions need to be taken in response to it;
- b) tracking and recording complaints, including actions undertaken in response to them;
- c) ensuring that any appropriate correction and corrective action are taken.

NOTE ISO 10002 provides guidance for complaints handling.

4.2.1-e) The certification body receiving the complaint shall be responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the complaint.

4.2.1-f) Whenever possible, the certification body shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint, and shall provide the complainant with progress reports and the result of the complaint.

4.2.1-g) The decision to be communicated to the complainant shall be made by, or reviewed and approved by, individual(s) not previously involved in the subject of the complaint.

4.2.1-h) Whenever possible, the certification body shall give formal notice of the end of the complaints-handling process to the complainant.

4.2.1-i) The certification body shall 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.

4.2.2 The complaint can be made to the Managing Director by the client or any other interested party in writing giving details of the complaint. The complaint shall either relate to the certification activities of LMS or to the certified client and its activities.

4.2.3 The complaints received are recorded in LMS-FM-054 and is acknowledged to the complainant. The managing director shall review the complaint to ascertain the seriousness and the genuineness of the complaint. LMS provides the complainant with progress reports and the outcome.

4.2.4. The complaint redressal process:

4.2.4.1. Complaints about LMS from the client or third party

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- (a) Depending on the nature of the complaint, *Chairman of the Impartiality Committee* shall decide to conduct the investigation himself or appoint a complaint panel for each complaint. The complaint panel shall contain at least two members from the LMS's auditor panel who have not been part of the audit and also not involved in certification decision or involved in the subject of the complaint. Further, the complainant shall be given an opportunity to present the case to the panel in person if he so desires.
- (b) The complaint panel shall investigate the complaint by looking into the records and / or talking to the complainant and LMS and shall take 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 register. Upon verification on the effectiveness of corrective action taken, LMS 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. *The final Decision on the resolution of complaint be taken by the chairman of the impartiality committee.*

4.2.4.2. Complaints about the certified client from its customers or any other third party:

- (a) LMS informs the client about the complaint received and ask the client to investigate the complaint and report the findings to LMS within two weeks from the date of receiving the complaint by the client.
- (b) If LMS does not receive any response from the client or the action taken by the client is not found effective, LMS informs the client accordingly and ask for a special audit at the client site by LMS. On confirmation from the client LMS shall conduct a special audit as per LMS procedure, QP-07 and investigate the complaint.
- (c) If the complaint is of serious nature LMS initiates the special audit directly with the client
- (d) As its policy, LMS never discloses the identity of the complainant to the client.
- (e) If any action is needed to be taken by the client LMS 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 LMS informs the complainant accordingly and the complaint shall then be treated as closed.

4.2.5. LMS decides to make public the complaint and its resolution if agreed with client and complainant.

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4.2.6. All the complaints received and their status with respect to their resolution are presented in the MRM and the IC meeting

4.3 Client feed back

4.3.1 After every audit (certification, surveillance and re-certification) a feedback from the client is obtained in document LMS-FM-055, to assess,

- LMS's office responsiveness to client queries at various stages of the certification process
- Performance of the audit team
- Areas for further improvement

4.3.2 All the feedback received from the clients are analyzed and appropriate action taken if required.

4.3.3 The actions taken are recorded in LMS-FM-055

4.3.4 A summary of feedback and the findings with corrective action taken are reviewed in MRM and IC meeting.

4.4 Disputes

4.4.1. Any dispute arising out of LMS's certification activities shall be settled by private negotiations between the parties, and if this is not possible it shall be referred to arbitration as per the Indian Arbitration Act, 1996, subject to Bhopal jurisdiction. The decision of the arbitration shall be binding for the both parties

4.4.2 Records of all the disputes are maintained and reviewed in MRM and IC meeting.

5.0 Records

- (a) LMS-FM-054 – Register for Appeal, complaints and disputes
- (b) LMS-FM-055 – Feedback form
- (c) LMS-FM-044-- Special Audit Report

6.0 References

- (a) PD-02-Rules and regulation for certification
- (b) OP-07, Procedure for Special Audit

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