



NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES (NABCB)

Quality Council of India (QCI), 2nd Floor, Institution of Engineers Building, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi – 110002

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Complaints and Appeals Procedure



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Effective : Immediate



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Contents

1.0	Complaints	3
2.0	Appeals	4
3.0	Financing the complaint, and Appeal Process	5
4.1	Complaints by individual Consumers against a Certified Organization / CAB / Accreditation Body	5
4.2	Complaints, or Appeal by a Certified Body against a CAB or by a CAB against the Accreditation Body	6
5.0	Records	6



1.0 Complaints

1.1 Complaint can be made by any person/consumer or body against the following

- i) the Board, its operation and/or procedures
- ii) the assessors, experts, committee members or staff of the Board
- iii) assessment process followed by the assessors and/or by the Board
- iv) misuse of the accredited status either in scope or in use of the accreditation body logo or accreditation symbol
- v) misuse of the IAF/ILAC MLA/MRA mark
- vi) quality of certification / inspection
- vii) certified organizations

1.2 The complaint shall be made in writing (by any means such as letter/ email etc.) to the CEO / Director with complete details of the complainant (name, address, organization etc.) and description of the complaint with supporting information / documents as relevant and necessary.

1.3 Any complaint received is reviewed to establish if it is related to NABCB accreditation (certificates issued with NABCB accreditation or CB practices relating to NABCB accreditation). If so, the CEO / Director validates the complaint based on verification of all necessary information gathered and then the complaint is registered and the NABCB procedure for handling complaints is followed.

1.4 The CEO/ Director will arrange to acknowledge the complaint within one week (excluding postal time, if any). In case any more information / document is needed, the same shall be sought from the complainant/ any other party as decided by the Board. If the complaint does not fall under the domain of NABCB, the complainant shall be informed of the same while providing possible assistance like referring the complaint to concerned accreditation body.

1.5 If the complaint has no details of the complainant or the description is not adequate, the NABCB will reserve the right of dealing with the complaint as deemed fit.

1.6 In case the complaint pertains to other accreditations but relates to NABCB accredited CABs, then the concerned Accreditation body is informed and efforts are also made to seek information from the CAB. Based on any inputs received from the CAB, the complainant is advised to follow up with the accreditation body. NABCB secretariat also pursues with the other accreditation body.

1.7 If the complaint is against the non-compliance of accreditation criteria by any applicant or accredited CAB, then NABCB shall encourage the complainant to utilize the complaint handling procedure of the relevant CAB. At the same time, NABCB shall also gather all necessary information for establishing validity of the complaint. If the complainant insists and the CAB agrees, then NABCB may carry out the investigation. The report of the analysis or parts there of as deemed necessary may be shared with the complainant and the CAB along with the invoice (see clause 4) as applicable to recover the cost of such complaint analysis.



- 1.8 In case the complaint pertains to a certified organization, the complaint would be referred to the accredited certification body for possible resolution. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the certification body, the complaint would be taken up further.
- 1.9 In case the complaint is received through some other organization/stakeholder, and not directly from the complainant, then the organization would be briefed of the outcome at the end of the process.
- 1.10 If the complaint involves other IAF/ILAC or regional cooperation members (whether signatory to MLA/MRA or not), NABCB will forward the complaint to them as appropriate.
- 1.11 The decision to be communicated to the complainant will be made /reviewed and approved by individuals not involved in the activities in question.
- 1.12 The CEO/Director will follow each complaint to conclusion and initiate appropriate corrective actions., in case the handling of complaints indicates some issues with NABCB procedures. Effectiveness of such actions would be assessed and reported in the Management review meetings. In respect of complaint against an NABCB applicant / accredited CAB, if established, the Board shall take appropriate actions as deemed fit which may even result in penal actions such as rejection of application or suspension/withdrawal of accreditation etc.
- 1.13 NABCB will make all efforts to process / resolve the complaint within 1 month, unless it requires more time depending on the nature of the complaint. NABCB will provide periodic updates on the progress of complaint investigation as well as information about its outcome to the complainant.
- 1.14 NABCB will give a formal notice at the end of the complaint handling process to the complainant.
- 1.15 NABCB will ensure that investigation and decision on complaints do not result in any discriminatory actions

2.0 Appeals

- 2.1 Any NABCB applicant / accredited CAB can file an appeal against the decision of the Board to the Chairman of the Board through the CEO / Director.
- 2.2 The appeal shall be filed in writing within thirty days of the decision of the Board along with all the necessary information / documents in support of the appeal.
- 2.3 The CEO / Director verifies the documents for completeness and may ask for additional information / documents, if necessary. Once the documents are complete, the CEO / Director validates the appeal based on verification of all necessary information gathered and then acknowledges the receipt of the appeal within a week and forwards the same to the Chairman. The Chairman has the right to either disallow the appeal or to form an Appeals Committee based on the merit of the contents of the appeal.



- 2.4 The Appeals committee is headed by one of the Board Members nominated by the Chairman. along with maximum two members out of the assessors, staff or experts of the Board as permanent members or any 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.
- 2.5 The Chair of Appeals Committee may ask the appellant to present the facts in person to the appeals committee if necessary or if so desired by the appellant.
- 2.6 The appeals committee may ask any of the staff, committee or empaneled assessors for the facts to help in discharging the appeal based on facts.
- 2.7 The Appeals committee shall give its recommendation to the Chairman of the Board for necessary action to discharge the appeal to the satisfaction of the appellant and regarding the preventive actions, if any, that must be taken to avoid such recurrences. The Chairman will give the decision on the appeal based on the recommendation by the appeals committee. The decision of the Chairman of the Board in this regard will be final. The CEO/Director shall ensure that appropriate corrective actions are initiated and taken, in case the handling of appeals indicates some issues with NABCB procedure.
- 2.8 NABCB will make all efforts to process / discharge the appeal within 2 months, unless it requires more time depending on the nature of the appeal. NABCB will provide periodic updates on the progress of appeal as well as information about its outcome its to the appellant. The information / records relating to appeals would be maintained.
- 2.9 NABCB will give a formal notice at the end of the appeal handling process to the appellant
- 2.10 NABCB will ensure that investigation and decision on appeals do not result in any discriminatory actions.
- 2.11 In case the decision is unacceptable to the appellant, an appeal can be made to APAC/IAF/ILAC, as relevant.

3.0 Financing the Complaint, and Appeal Process

If the resolution of the Complaint or Appeal is done without undertaking any travel or additional assessment, no financing will be needed for such resolutions.

If the resolution calls for undertaking travel and assessment, the cost will be borne by the defaulting party.

4.1 Complaints by individual Consumers against a Certified Organization / CAB / Accreditation Body

Individual consumer will not be asked to pay for any cost of the resolution of the Complaint. The cost will be financed by any of the defaulting entity, the Certified Body, the CAB or the Accreditation Body.



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4.2 Complaints, or Appeal by a Certified Body against a CAB or by a CAB against the Accreditation Body

In case of such complaints, the body that is making the Complaint, or Appeal, will be asked to give an undertaking that they will provide for the travel and assessment related cost of resolution if their complaint /appeal is dismissed. If the complaint is against a Certification Body, the concerned CB would also be asked to give an undertaking that they will provide for the travel and assessment cost in case the decision is against them.

5.0 Records

CEO, NABCB or a designated officer would maintain a record of all complaints and appeals received, actions taken, corrective actions, if any, and their effectiveness. These records would be maintained for a period of 5 years

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Amendment Record

<u>Date</u>	<u>Auth. by</u>	<u>Description of Amendment</u>
Mar 2012	CEO	To reference CEO
Feb 2014	CEO	To elaborate the complaint process
Mar 2017	CEO	To include timelines for disposal of complaints & appeals as decided by NABCB Board
Jan 2019	CEO	To align with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011:2017
Oct 2021	CEO	inclusion of misuse of IAF/ILAC MLA/MRA mark under clause 1.1