



# **Complaints and Appeals Procedure**

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**Issue Status Sheet**

The issue status is indicated by the version number in the footer of this document. It identifies the issue status of this Procedure. When any part of this Procedure is amended, a record is made in the Amendment Log shown below. The Procedure can be fully revised and re-issued at the discretion of the Compliance Assurance Team. Please note that this Procedure is not valid if printed or downloaded and is classed as “uncontrolled”.

Version No.	Amendment	Date	Approved By (Document Owner)
1	Creation - Draft	05/04/2024	EM/PC
2	Update timelines for response	17/04/2024	EM/PC
3	Updated to add align terminology	02/05/2024	EM/JR
4	Corrections to Footer Version number and text on The Issue Status paragraph	16/08/2024	EM/PC
5	Procedure rewritten to align with Group protocol for Complaints and Feedback, Doc ID Ref changed, clearer guidance on investigation of Complaints and handling of Appeals	27/03/2024	PC/NH

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## 1 Procedure Objective

- 1.1. To systemise the identification, recording and analysis of complaints, appeals and feedback with impartiality as standard.
- 1.2. To facilitate the regular review of complaint and feedback analysis in line with Continuous Improvement requirements.

## 2 Scope

- 2.1. This procedure applies to complaints, appeals and feedback received from clients and interested parties. It is applicable to all elements of the Amtivo Management System and all members of staff.

## 3 Definitions

- 3.1. Definitions outlined in standards and supporting materials will be applicable.
- 3.2. **Appeal:** A disagreement that affects the outcome or decision of the certification, activities or certification scheme.
- 3.3. **Complaint:** Any dissatisfaction with a product, service, process or work activity covered within the scope of the organisation's Management System that is reported by a client or Interested Party.
- 3.4. **Corrective Action:** Action taken to eliminate the cause of a complaint or nonconformance or implement a change or improvement.
- 3.5. **Feedback:** Evaluative information about a product, service, action, or process to the original source, which does not affect the outcome or decision of the certification activities or the certification scheme.
- 3.6. **Nonconformance:** Any product, service, action or event that does not conform to a process or procedure detailed in the organisation's Management System but is not reported by a client.

## 4 Responsibilities

- 4.1. Responsibility for all decisions at all levels of the complaints handling process shall lie with the Certification Body.
- 4.2. It is the responsibility of the Compliance Assurance Manager to ensure that this procedure is implemented, and any resources required are made available.
- 4.3. It is the responsibility of the Compliance Assurance Manager to monitor the effectiveness of this procedure and report the results at management reviews.
- 4.4. It is the responsibility of the of the Compliance Assurance Manager to ensure the **Amtivo Corrective Action Log** is maintained and reviewed.
- 4.5. It is the responsibility of the Compliance Assurance Manager to allocate complaints to the appropriate Department Lead for investigation.

## 5 Complaint Management Process and Feedback

- 5.1. Clients, interested parties, or other members of the public may submit a complaint or other feedback through the website either via the form on the Feedback and Appeal page, or via the email link on the Contact page of the Amtivo/British Assessment Bureau website, which is automatically sent to the Assurance Team email address [assuranceteam@amtivo.com](mailto:assuranceteam@amtivo.com).

Emails detailing a complaint submitted to a member of staff will also be forwarded to this email address.

- 5.2. The Compliance Assurance Manager is responsible for triaging incoming submissions to determine the following:
- If they are a complaint, expression of dissatisfaction or appeal of an audit result
  - If a complaint or expression of dissatisfaction relates to certification activities Amtivo in the UK or Ireland are responsible for, or if they are related to a client certified by Amtivo in the UK or Ireland.
- 5.3. The Compliance Assurance Manager shall ensure the complainant receives a formal acknowledgement of the complaint within three working days. An outline of the complaints procedure will be provided to the complainant.
- 5.4. The Compliance Assurance Manager will complete the initial stages of the **Amtivo Management Systems Complaints Form** and log the complaint on **Amtivo Management Systems Complaints Tracker**.
- 5.5. The Compliance Assurance Manager will complete the first stage of the **Amtivo Management Systems Complaints Form** before submitting it with the **Internal Corrective Action Submission Form** to the Chief Service Delivery Officer, Sales Operations Manager or other appropriate Departmental Lead for delegation, investigation, corrective action, completion and return to the Assurance Team.
- 5.5.1. The Compliance Assurance Manager and selected Departmental Lead shall ensure the investigation remains impartial and individuals tasked with participating shall:
- Be free from any conflict of interest with the complainant
  - Be impartial and review all evidence provided
  - Meet Amtivo in Ireland and the UK's competence criteria as decision-maker for any related standard(s).
- 5.6. The Compliance Assurance Manager will request updates weekly via email on all open complaint investigations from the relevant Departmental Lead.
- 5.7. The Compliance Assurance Manager shall ensure the complainant is formally notified of the outcome of the investigation. Where the investigation, correction, and corrective action exceeds the anticipated 21 working day timeline for completion, the complainant shall be provided progress updates regularly.
- 5.8. Containment actions, root cause analysis, and corrective action shall be documented in the **Amtivo Corrective Action Log** and on the **Internal Corrective Action Submission Form**.
- 5.9. Where a complaint is received regarding a client holding certification with Amtivo in the UK or Ireland, the client shall be contacted for comment and, where necessary, corrective action. The investigation of the complaint shall include a consideration for the effectiveness of the client's management system and determine if a special visit is required to further facilitate the investigation. This decision and any subsequent actions shall be documented in the **Amtivo Corrective Action Log** and on the **Amtivo Management Systems Complaints Form**.
- 5.10. Where applicable, top management shall determine if the subject of the complaint and the resolution should be made public.
- 5.11. The **Amtivo Management Systems Complaints Tracker** shall be updated with the following information:
- The records of all communications with the complainant, including formal notice of the end of the complaints-handling process
  - The results of the investigation
  - Records of notifications to scheme owners and other interested parties, when required.
  - Any subsequent correction or corrective action taken by Amtivo in the UK or Ireland.
  - Whether the complaint was determined to be justified/partially justified/unjustified.

### 6 Appeals

- 6.1. Clients may submit an appeal through the website either via the form on the Feedback and Appeal page, or via the email link on the Contact page of the Company Website, which is automatically sent to the Assurance Team email address [assuranceteam@amtivo.com](mailto:assuranceteam@amtivo.com). Any member of staff receiving an appeal should advise the Assurance Team immediately via their email address.
- 6.2. Submission, investigation and decision on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the client.
- 6.3. The Compliance Assurance Manager is responsible for logging the appeal in the **Amtivo Management Systems Complaints Tracker**.
- 6.4. The Compliance Assurance Manager is responsible for formally acknowledging receipt of the appeal within three working days and advising the client of the appeals process. The client is to be invited to provide further information, all of which the Compliance Assurance Manager is to ensure is logged on **Amtivo Management Systems Complaints Tracker**.
- 6.5. The Compliance Assurance Manager shall advise the relevant Scheme Manager of the appeal and both shall determine:
  - The team member(s) who conducted the audit
  - That the audit report has been completed in **Amtivo Connect** or **BabCom**.
- 6.6. The Compliance Assurance Manager and the Scheme Manager will appoint a committee of up to three members to review the appeal. These members must:
  - Be a certified auditor for the related standard(s) contracted or employed by Amtivo in Ireland or the UK
  - Be free of any conflict of interest with the client
  - Be impartial
  - Review all evidence provided
  - Have had no direct involvement in the audit or certification decision
- 6.7. The Appeals Committee will review the appeal over five working days. If they are unable to complete the appeal in this time, they must inform the Compliance Assurance Manager and Scheme Manager. The Compliance Assurance Manager will update the client who has lodged the appeal.
- 6.8. No member of the committee is permitted to participate in subsequent certification decisions for this audit.
- 6.9. The committee will provide a report to the Scheme Manager and Compliance Assurance Manager on completion of their investigation.
- 6.10. The decision(s) reached by the committee shall be reviewed by the Compliance Assurance Manager and the Scheme Manager. The Compliance Assurance Manager will inform the client of the result of the appeal in writing, enclosing a copy of the Investigation Report. The client shall be notified of next steps and available options to contact the appropriate accreditation bodies or scheme owners.
- 6.11. If the appealed nonconformity or certification decision was withdrawn, the Scheme Manager shall contact the auditor and/or decision maker to review the Appeal Committee's findings. The Scheme Manager will also change the status of the nonconformance to 'withdrawn' in client's non-conformances log in **Amtivo Connect** or **BABCOM**.
- 6.12. When required, scheme owners and other relevant interested parties are informed of the outcome of decisions.
- 6.13. The **Amtivo Management Systems Complaints Tracker** shall be updated with the following information:
  - The email records of all communications with the client, including formal notice of the decision.
  - The results of the investigation and decision.
  - Records of notifications to scheme owners and other interested parties, when required.

- Any subsequent correction or corrective action taken by Amtivo in the UK or Ireland.

### **7 Associated Documents and Systems**

- 7.1. Amtivo Management Systems Complaints Form **COMP\_MS\_CF01**
- 7.2. Amtivo Management Systems Complaints Tracker **COMP\_CATMSCT\_01**
- 7.3. Amtivo Corrective Action Log **FOR-COR-001**
- 7.4. Internal Corrective Action Submission Form **AMTIVO\_ICASF\_01**
- 7.5. Amtivo Connect
- 7.6. **BABCOM**
- 7.7. All associated documents referred to in this procedure are highlighted in bold and underlined.
- 7.8. Master copies of documents are retained by Document Control.