

Appeals, Complaints, and Feedback Procedure

1. Purpose

To systemise the identification, recording and analysis of complaints, appeals, and feedback in order to prevent problems arising, and to facilitate the continual improvement of the Business Management System (BMS).

2. Scope

This procedure applies to complaints, appeals and feedback received from interested parties.

3. Associated Documents & Systems

All associated documents referred to in this procedure are highlighted in bold.

- **Amtivo Connect** manages operational processes and holds operational records.
- **QStar** stores local records and manages operations for former ISA clients
- **Activ** details the processes followed and is the source of controlled documents and some records.
- **OASIS**, software used by aerospace clients

4. Definitions

Definitions defined in standards and supporting materials will be applicable, also see below:

Appeal: A disagreement that affects the outcome or decision of the certification activities or certification scheme.

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.

Corrective action: Action taken to, eliminate the cause of a complaint or nonconformance, or implement a change or improvement.

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.

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.

5. Responsibility

- 5.1. It is the responsibility of the Governance Manager to ensure that this procedure is implemented, and any resources required are made available.
- 5.2. It is the responsibility of the Governance Manager to monitor the effectiveness of this procedure and report the results at management reviews.
- 5.3. It is the responsibility of the Governance Manager to ensure the **Improvement Log** is maintained and reviewed in accordance with Section 7 of this procedure.
- 5.4. It is the responsibility of all employees to proactively identify nonconformances and support the implementation of corrective actions.

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6. Process Map – n/a

7. Procedure

7.1 Appeals

- 7.1.1 Clients may submit a request to appeal a nonconformity raised during an assessment or a certification decision through the Amtivo USA website, Feedback and Appeals form
- 7.1.2 Emails received directly by a member of staff, pertaining to an appeal will also be forwarded to the Governance Manager.
- 7.1.3 The Governance Manager is notified of the appeal via email and logs the appeal in the **Improvement Log in Activ**. The Governance Manager is responsible for acknowledging receipt of the appeal in a timely manner and briefs the client on the appeals process. The client is given the opportunity to provide any additional information to support the appeal. This information is also logged in **Activ**.
- 7.1.4 The Governance Manager shall notify the appropriate Manager of the appeal and together will conduct a preliminary investigation to confirm the following:
 - Identify the audit team member(s) who conducted the audit
- 7.1.5 Ensure the audit report has been completed in **Amtivo Connect, QStar** or **OASIS**,
- 7.1.6 The selection of the appropriate Manager will be based on their involvement in the matter being appealed.
- 7.1.7 The Governance Manager and the Manager will select a committee of one to three members to review the appeal. The committee members must:
 - Be free from any conflict of interest with the client
 - Be impartial and review all evidence provided
 - Be a certified auditor for the related standard(s) contracted or employed by Amtivo USA
 - Not have engaged in the audit directly or been involved in the certification decision
- 7.1.8 A member of the Appeal Committee may not participate in any subsequent certification decision related to this audit
- 7.1.9 The Appeal Committee is granted seven days to review the appeal, review the audit package, and any additional information provided by the client. Each committee member will document their investigation and decision on the **Appeal Committee Investigation Report**
- 7.1.10 The Governance Manager and the Manager will review the Appeal Committee's decisions and compile the results into one **Appeal Committee Investigation Report**. The Governance Manager shall notify the client of the result via email and provide the client with 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.
- 7.1.11 **For AS91XX or for IATF 16949**, the appeals process does not impact the timing related to the nonconformity management process. Where nonconformities or certification decisions are found to be valid, the client must adhere to the required due dates for response and resolution.
- 7.1.12 If the appealed nonconformity or certification decision was withdrawn, the Manager shall contact the auditor and/or decision maker to review the Appeal Committee's findings. The Manager will also change the status of the nonconformance to '*withdrawn*' in client's non-conformances log in **Amtivo Connect or QStar**.

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- 7.1.13 **For AS91XX**, if an NCR(s) are withdrawn the auditor shall update the record in OASIS
- 7.1.14 **For IATF 16949**, the IATF Scheme Manager shall be notified of any withdrawn NCRs for update of the IATF database.
- 7.1.15 When required, scheme owners and other relevant interested parties are informed of the outcome of decisions, see **Scheme Procedures** and the **Communication Procedure** for details.
- 7.1.16 The **Improvement Log** in **Activ** 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 USA

7.2 Complaints & Feedback

- 7.2.1 Clients, interested parties, or other members of the public may submit a complaint or other feedback through the Amtivo USA website, Feedback and Appeals form. This may relate to Amtivo's (or its partners') activities or the activities of a certified client.
- 7.2.2 Emails received directly by a member of staff, pertaining to a complaint will also be forwarded to the Governance Manager.
- 7.2.3 The Governance Manager is notified of the complaint via email and logs the complaint in the **Improvement Log** in **Activ**. The Governance Manager is responsible for conducting an initial review of the complaint to determine the validity of the complaint, if it is related to certification activities Amtivo USA is responsible for, or if it related to a client certified by Amtivo USA.
- 7.2.4 The Governance Manager is responsible for acknowledging receipt of the complaint in a timely manner and briefs the complainant on the complaints process.
- 7.2.5 The Governance Manager 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 USA's competence criteria as decision-maker for any related standard(s)
- 7.2.6 Containment actions, root cause analysis, and corrective action shall be documented in the **Improvement Log** in **Activ**, where the complaint relates to Amtivo activities. For example, this is not required when investigating a complaint related to a client's actions.
- 7.2.7 **Client Complaint:** Where a complaint is received regarding a client holding certification with Amtivo USA, 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 **Improvement Log**.

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- 7.2.8 **Auditor Complaint:** Where a complaint is received regarding an auditor, Amtivo shall conduct an investigation which will typically involve contacting all parties. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, Amtivo may:
- Not uphold the complaint
 - Require the auditor to take additional training and/or evaluation
 - Suspend or downgrade auditor status pending further training and evaluation
 - Terminate its relationship with the auditor
 - In the event of serious allegations, Amtivo may immediately suspend the auditor pending further investigation.
- 7.2.9 The Governance Manager shall ensure the complainant is formally notified of the outcome of the investigation. Where the investigation, correction, and corrective action exceeds the anticipated timeline for completion, the complainant shall be provided progress updates regularly.
- 7.2.10 Where applicable, top management shall determine if the subject of the complaint and the resolution should be made public
- 7.2.11 Complaints or feedback originating from the **OASIS Feedback Center** shall be processed in accordance with this procedure. Formal closure of the complaint will be documented in **OASIS**.
- 7.2.12 The **Improvement Log** in **Activ** 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 USA

7.3 Concerns

- 7.3.1 In the case of **R2v3**, the scheme owner (SERI) may raise a concern rather than a complaint. This is an issue that is not urgent in nature. The process for dealing with a concern requires logging on Activ and an investigation completed within 6 months. The Governance Manager and Scheme owner shall review concerns and determine the action is required.

7.4 Timescales

Timescales are subject to change based on the nature, extent, and impact of the appeal or complaint. Where Amtivo is unable to meet the target timescales of this procedure, Amtivo will provide periodic updates to concerned parties whilst the appeal, complaint or concern is addressed.

7.4.1 Appeals

- The appeal submission shall be acknowledged as soon as possible
- 7 days for the appeal committee to review the appeal and come to a decision

7.4.2 Complaints

- 7 days to acknowledge receipt of the complaint
- 14 days to perform an investigation and determine validity of the complaint

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- 30 days to complete the correction, determine root cause, create a corrective action plan
- 60 days to implement the corrective action(s) and inform the complainant of the outcome

7.4.3 Specific Scheme Owner Requirements

The R2v3 scheme has specific timescales to respond to complaints or concerns raised by SERI.

7.4.4 Concern

- 7 days to acknowledge receipt of concern to SERI
- 6 months to complete investigation and provide feedback to SERI
- Extension shall be request from SERI if the concern is not able to be closed within 6 months

7.4.5 Complaints

- 7 days to acknowledge receipt of complaint to SERI
- 21 days to perform a preliminary review and provide outcome to SERI
- 30 days to perform the investigation and provide outcome to SERI
- 60 days to resolve the complaint to provide outcome to SERI
- Extensions shall be requested from SERI complaints are not able to be resolved in this timeframe.

7.4.6 SERI review responses from Amtivo. In the event responses are rejected, SERI will work with Amtivo to define new timelines for submission.

7.4.7 SERI require monthly updates on complaints and concerns. This is detailed in the **Communications Procedure**