

**AMENDMENT RECORD**

DCRF	PAGE NO.	REVISION NO.	DATE REVISED	CHANGES
06	6 and 7	00	01/01/2022	Revision in the process flow charts.
	5 and 7	01	16/11/2024	Addition of Annex-1 related to timeline for handling appeals & complaints.



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PROCEDURE FOR CUSTOMER COMPLAINT, APPEALS & FEEDBACK	ACI-SOP-06
	Rev. 02
	Revision date: 16/11/2024

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## 1. Introduction

This procedure defines Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited' responsibilities for receiving, evaluating, and making decisions on appeals, complaints and disputes concerning the certification & inspection system activities or decisions, and the maintenance of relative records as required by the following standards & guidelines;

- ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Conformity assessment- Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services.
- ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems.
- ISO/IEC 17021-2:2016, Conformity assessment— Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems Part 2: Competence requirements for auditing & certification of environmental management systems.
- ISO/IEC 17021-3:2017, Conformity assessment— Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems Part 3: Competence requirements for auditing & certification of quality management systems.
- ISO/IEC 17021-10:2018, Conformity assessment— Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems Part 3: Competence requirements for auditing & certification of Occupational Health & Safety Management systems.
- ISO 22003-1:2022, Food Safety- Part 1: Requirements for Bodies Providing audit & certification of food safety management systems.
- G-02/19-Rev 07, PNAC Guidelines of Accreditation Conditions for Certification Bodies.

## 2. Applicability

This procedure covers two types of complaints; those made by ACERTA Certification & Inspection Private Limited (ACI) clients against ACI and complaints against ACI certified clients by interested third parties. This process is subject to ACI requirements for confidentiality.

## 3. Procedure

### 3.1 Appeals

- 3.1.1** ACI has a documented process to receive, evaluate and make decisions on appeals.
- 3.1.2** A description of the appeals-handling process is publicly accessible.
- 3.1.3** ACI may be responsible for all decisions at all levels of the appeals-handling process. ACI ensures that the persons engaged in the appeals-handling process are different from those who carried out the audits and made the certification decisions.
- 3.1.4** Submission, investigation, and decision on appeals do not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.
- 3.1.5** At the time of any complaint or appeal, a committee containing relevant technical experts will be formed to look after the received appeal or complaint.
- 3.1.6** The appeals-handling process includes at least the following elements and methods:

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- a. An outline of the process for receiving, validating and investigating the appeal, and for deciding what actions are to be taken in response to it, taking into account the results of previous similar appeals;
  - b. Be tracking and recording appeals, including actions undertaken to resolve them;
  - c. Ensuring that any appropriate correction and corrective action are taken.
- 3.1.7** ACI acknowledges receipt of the appeal and provides the appellant with progress reports and the outcome.
- 3.1.8** The decision to be communicated to the appellant may made by, or reviewed and approved by, individual(s) not previously involved in the subject of the appeal.
- 3.1.9** ACI gives formal notice to the appellant of the end of the appeals-handling process.
- 3.1.10** Applications in the case of any appeals regarding certification services may have made to ACI. A committee for appeals is established and be responsible for resolving such cases and inform the related parties accordingly.
- 3.1.11** The members of this committee are independent from any phase of the certification related to the subject of the appeal.
- 3.1.12** This committee consists of a minimum of three (3) persons, Decisions regarding appeals are taken unanimously, not by majority of votes.

### **3.2 Complaints**

- 3.2.1** A description of the complaints-handling process is publicly accessible.
- 3.2.2** Upon receipt of a complaint, ACI confirms whether the complaint relates to certification activities that it is responsible for and, if so, deals with it. If the complaint relates to a certified client, then examination of the complaint is considered the effectiveness of the certified system.
- 3.2.3** Any complaint about a certified client is also referred by ACI to the certified client in question at an appropriate time.
- 3.2.4** ACI has a documented process to receive, evaluate and make decisions on complaints. This process is subjected to requirements for confidentiality, as it relates to the complainant and to the subject of the complaint.
- 3.2.5** The complaints-handling process includes at least the following elements and methods:
- a. an outline of the process for receiving, validating, investigating the complaint, and for deciding what actions are 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.
- a. ACI receiving the complaint is responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the complaint.
- b. Whenever possible, ACI acknowledges receipt of the complaint, and provides the complainant with progress reports and the outcome.
- c. The decision to be communicated to the complainant is made by, or reviewed and approved by, individual(s) not previously involved in the subject of the complaint.
- d. Whenever possible, the Certification body gives formal notice of the end of the complaints-handling process to the complainant.
- e. ACI determines, together with the client and the complainant, whether and, if so to what extent, the subject of the complaint and its resolution is made public.
- f. Applications in the case of any complaints regarding certification services is made to ACI. A committee for complaints shall be established and be responsible for resolving such cases and inform the related parties accordingly.

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- g. The members of this committee are independent from any phase of the Certification related to the subject of the complaint.

Complaints by consumers regarding a certified product(s) / service(s) and management system is evaluated by the (ACI), which is responsible for making the necessary investigations. If, because of such evaluations, the complaint is found to be justified, the certificate holder is required to compensate for the damage(s) caused under the relevant provisions of the contract.

### 3.3 Progress Reports

The client is notified through email regarding the progress of the complaint, dispute or appeal.

### 3.4 Outcome and Final Resolution

- 3.4.1 Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited is responsible for the resolution of all complaints.
- 3.4.2 The client is notified of the outcome and the final resolution of the complaint, dispute or appeal through email notification and/or hard copy notification.
- 3.4.3 Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited is responsible for communicating with the complainant and the Client whether and to what extent the subject of the complaint and its resolution.
- 3.4.4 Information about a particular client or individual shall not be disclosed to a third party without the written consent of the client or individual concerned.

### 3.5 Customer Feedback

- 3.5.1 Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited considers customer satisfaction, as its first and foremost objective. The persons dealing with their respective clients are responsible to obtain customer feedback to monitor information relating to customer perception as to whether the organization has fulfilled customer requirements.
- 3.5.2 Customer Feedback Form, is used for this purpose, which enlists different parameters of service quality offered by Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited Feedback is obtained from the clients by the Manager Operations/MR usually after the complete audit activity.
- 3.5.3 Feedbacks received from the clients are analyzed and the cumulative feedback report is prepared by the MR and submitted to the DIRECTOR.
- 3.5.4 The results of such analysis are reviewed at the management review meetings to suggest improvements in Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited management system.

## Annex: 1

A proposed time frame for handling complaints and appeals to ensure timely and effective resolution:

### 1. Receipt and Acknowledgment of Complaint/Appeal

- **Timeline:** Within 2 working days
- **Actions:**
  - Confirm receipt of the complaint or appeal.

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- Acknowledge the complainant/appellant and provide an initial response confirming that the issue is being investigated.

## 2. Validation and Initial Review

- **Timeline:** Within 5 working days from acknowledgment
- **Actions:**
  - Verify whether the complaint or appeal relates to ACI's certification activities.
  - If valid, log the complaint/appeal and initiate an internal investigation.
  - If the issue concerns a certified client, notify the client appropriately.

## 3. Committee Formation and Detailed Investigation

- **Timeline:** Within 10 working days from receipt of the complaint/appeal
- **Actions:**
  - Form a committee including a relevant technical expert to address the complaint or appeal.
  - Conduct a thorough investigation, gathering all necessary information and evidence.

## 4. Progress Reporting

- **Timeline:** Every 10 working days or as significant updates occur
- **Actions:**
  - Send progress reports to the complainant/appellant, informing them of the current status and expected resolution timeline.

## 5. Decision and Final Resolution

- **Timeline:** Within 30 working days from receipt of complaint/appeal
- **Actions:**
  - Conclude the investigation and make a decision.
  - Ensure that the resolution decision is reviewed by personnel not involved in the original certification decision.
  - Communicate the final resolution to the complainant/appellant.

## 6. Corrective and Preventive Actions

- **Timeline:** Immediately following the final decision, if necessary
- **Actions:**
  - Implement any corrective actions required to prevent recurrence of similar complaints or appeals.
  - Review and adjust relevant procedures if systemic issues are identified.

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#### 7. Closure Notification

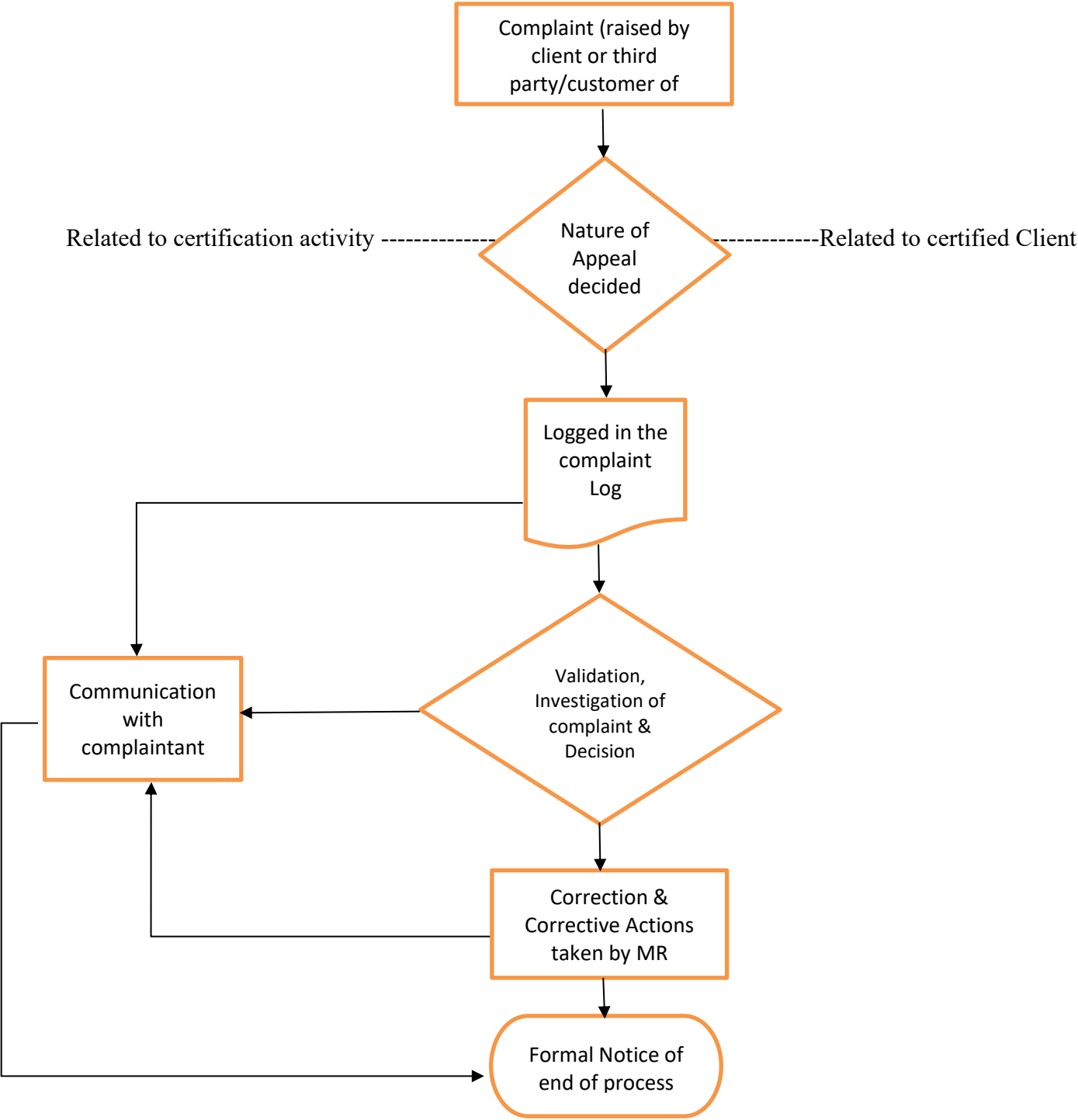
- **Timeline:** Within 5 working days after final resolution
- **Actions:**
  - Notify the complainant/appellant formally of the closure of the complaint or appeal process.
  - Document and archive all records related to the complaint or appeal.

This timeline ensures that complaints and appeals are addressed efficiently and transparently, aligning with ACI's commitment to maintaining high standards in certification service.

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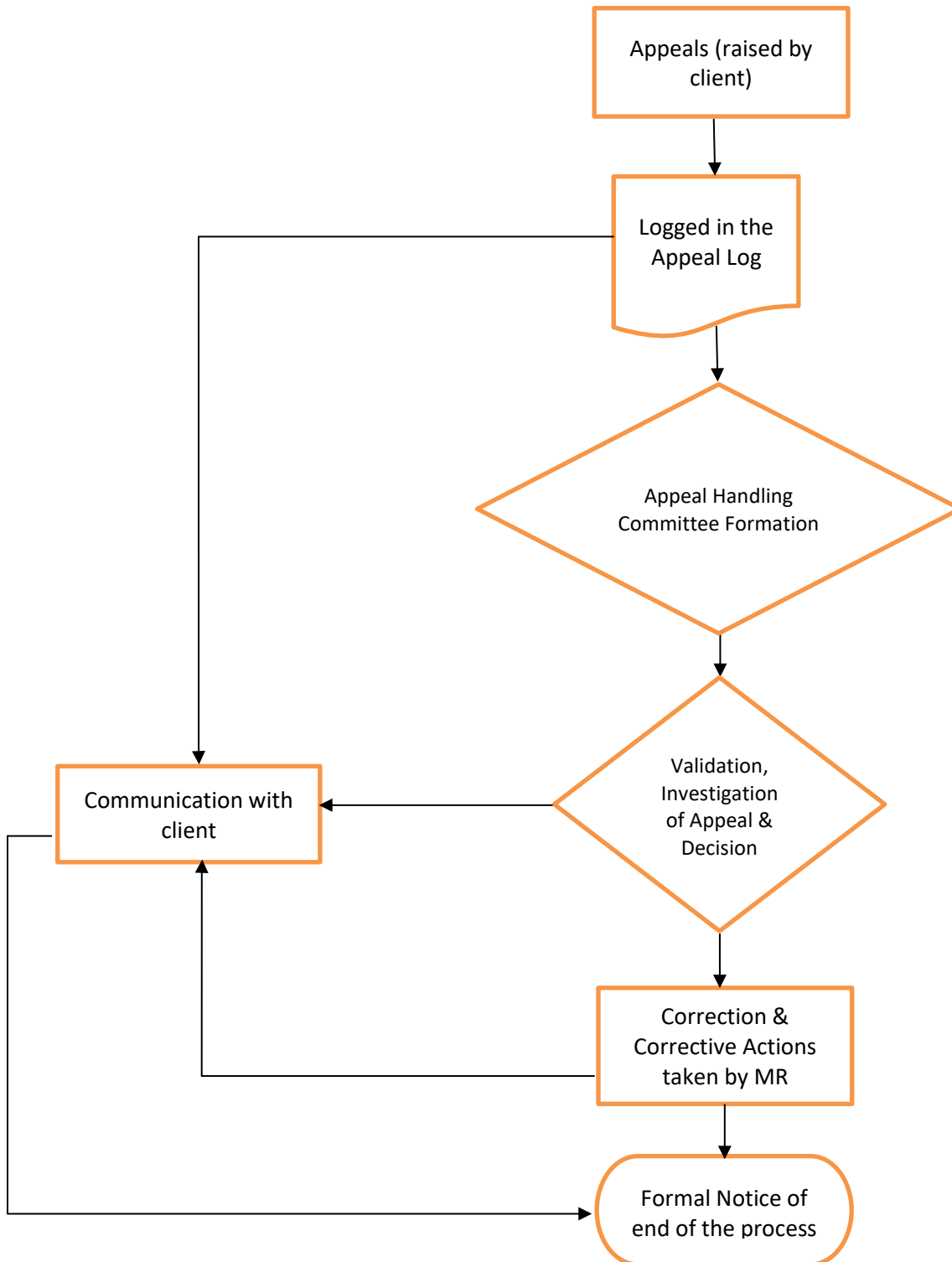
4. Process Flows

Process Flow Chart Complaints Handling





Process Flow Chart Appeals Handling



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## 5. Related Documents

1. Customer Feedback Form (ACI- F022)
2. Customer Complaint Form (ACI-F023)
3. Customer Appeal Form (ACI-F025)
4. Customer Complaint Log (ACI-F024)