



EQUALITAS Company LP


procedure of Complaint and appeal management

Code: P-14

Modification NO	Page NO	date of Modify	Description of Modification

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Owner of copy:	Issue Date:	Issue NO:
Department:	Review Date:	Review NO:
Language of procedure: English <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	العربية	NO of copy:

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1. Purpose

The purpose of complaint and appeal management is the correct and orderly processing of complaints and appeals.

The aims of complaint and appeal management are:

- Restoration of customer satisfaction
- Prevention of negative effects on customer satisfaction such as loss of sales and image
- Support and optimisation of the processes for continual improvement.

2. Scope

This Procedure applies for all employees of EQUALITAS. The complaints form can use by each EQUALITAS employee. The international offices will report complaints regarding system or product certification services directly to the international certification department (see Annex 1 to the Quality Manual: Responsibility of Branch Offices). This department then registers the complaints in the system for further processing as described below. The rules laid down in Group Regulation have implemented by means of this Procedure. Evaluation of data regarding internal complaints about employees will no longer carry out with the system after 1 year.

3. Definitions

3.1. Complaint regarding:

A customer declares his dissatisfaction in writing or by word of mouth with regard to the type of service offered by EQUALITAS of the way in which the service has performed.

3.2. Complaint regarding customer:

A third person (e.g. supplier, accreditation body, customer etc.) declares his dissatisfaction with the management system, the product or the service of a customer of EQUALITAS (e.g. use of the certificate)

3.3. Appeal:

A customer declares in writing or by word of mouth that he is not satisfied with the result of the service (e.g. Scope of Certification)

3.4. Audit Stage 2:

On-site assessment of the implementation and effectiveness of a management system; this will be the basis of issuance of certificate.

3.5. Legal implications:

Consequences for the company in civil and criminal law cannot exclude.

3.6. Effect on the public:

Media interest cannot exclude.

3.7. Confidential content:

Complaint regarding a person such as for example their behavior as regards the customer or the quality of his service from the point of view of expertise Confidentiality can also extend to the person making the complaint.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. CAB Director:

The CAB Director is responsible:

- Creation of the rules regarding complaints and appeal management
- Implementation and maintenance of the complaints and appeal management
- Contact and information flow to relevant persons and bodies (executive board, the public, the customer).

4.2. QM Manager

The QM Manager is responsible:

- a) Introduction, control and further development of complaint and appeal management in EQUALITAS.
- b) Support in the processing of complaints and appeals in individual cases and at the request of the company management

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- c) Analysis of the complaints procedures and of appeals for weaknesses and potentials for improvement
- d) Initiation of corrective actions and improvements
- e) Checking for fulfilment of the rules and regulations regarding complaints and appeal management, among others with regard to internal audits
- f) Information and co-ordination in cases of major complaints and appeals including legally relevant aspects or aspects, which may influence the public with the relevant bodies within EQUALITAS.
- g) Informing the top management regularly with regard to the complaints situation and handling
- h) Drafting of an annual status report
- i) Complaints and appeal controlling,

4.3. Departmental heads and group leaders

The departmental heads and group leaders are responsible:

- a) Proper processing of complaints and appeals
- b) Contact and information flow to the customer
- c) Other employees can be involved in the processing of complaints and appeals.

4.4. Employees.

- a) Receive complaints and appeals and to enter them into the system (Intranet entry mask).
- b) Identify internal nonconformities independently and to pass these on to the group leader responsible in order to avoid complaints and appeals.
- c) To cooperate in the processing of complaints and appeals, when these are delegated to them..


5. Procedures

The Procedure for complaint and appeal management has divided into 4 partial processes: Receipt and recording, processing, assessment and evaluation and controlling.

The following allocations laid down in the system:

Certification service	Head of Department (HD)
Order Service	Head of Department
International Certification	Head of Department
Food and beverage	Group leader (GL)
Automotive	Group leader
Integrated MS	Head of Department
Health	Group leader
Aerospace	Head of Department
Product safety	Head of Department
Consumer goods	Group Leader
Safety Related Services	Head of Department
Machines	Group leader
Medical technology	Group leader
Don't know	QM Manager
Internal procedures	QM Manager

HD & GL: Responsible heads of department and group leaders TM: Top company management


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5.1. Receipt / Recording of a complaint / an appeal:

	To Do	who	What with	Info to	Date
5.1.1	Receipt(by telephone, in person, in writing or other)	Each employee			To
5.1.2	Recording - Enter available documents	Each employee	Complain form		To + 1 working day
5.1.3	transfer to responsible HDGL including email		EQUALITAS mail		
5.1.4	First contact with customer	HD,GL	By telephone, in person, in writing		T0 + 2 working days
5.1.5	Does complaint affect the public?	HD,GL		TM, Staff section ,QM Manager Communication	immediately
5.1.6	Does complaint contain items of legal significance?	HD,GL		TM, QM Manager Legal department	immediately
5.1.7	Is complaint confidential, does it relate to an employee?	HD,GL		TM	immediately

5.2. Processing of a complaint / an appeal

	TODO	Who	What with	Info to	Dates
5.2.1	Check allocation / correct if necessary	HD, GL	EQUALITAS database		
5.2.2	Receipt of complaint Change / Modification of the following information (Status, Priority, Effect, Date, Category, Classification	HD, GL	EQUALITAS database		T0 + 5 working days
5.2.3	If time is exceeded there is automatic reminder to HDGL		EQUALITAS database		After T0 + 5 working days
5.2.4	If time is exceeded there is automatic reminder to HDGL + Top Management		EQUALITAS database		After T0 + 10 working days
5.2.5	Analysis of complaint and involvement of employees	HD, GL, Employee			
5.2.6	Processing / Corrections	HD, GL, Employee			
5.2.7	Communication with customers and relevant locations (see 5.1.5 ff) with regard to correction *)	HD, GL			
5.2.8	Conclusion of complaint, or written report to the customer, add available documents in EQUALITAS database)	HD, GL	EQUALITAS database	Relevant locations – see 5.1.5 ff	
5.2.9	Completion in database Change / Modification of the following information: (Status, Completion code, Effect, Solution = Text entry*)				
5.2.10	Information regarding conclusion of procedure to the complainant *)				

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5.3. Evaluation of a complaint / an appeal

	TODO	Who	What with	Info to	Dates
5.3.1	Evaluations according to categories	QM Mgr.	EQUALITAS database		annually
5.3.2	Analysis and processing of the potentials for improvement, involvement of further locations	QM Mgr.		s. 5.1.5 ff	continual
5.3.3	Status report to the TM	QM Mgr.		V-QM	annually
5.3.4	Assessment of the effectiveness of the complaint and appeal management	TM			annually

5.4. Controlling

	TODO	Who	What with	Info an	Dates
5.4.1	Review of the effectiveness of the complaint/appeal management by questioning selected customers	QMB	EQUALITAS database	TM	case-to-case as required

5.5.1 Appeals

5.5.1.1 Any client shall make an appeal to the Managing Director of EQUALITAS in respect of the following,

- a. Non acceptance of client's application for certification.
- b. Granting, suspending, withdrawing or denying of certification

5.5.1.2 EQUALITAS shall record all appeals in document FP-14-01 and acknowledge the receipt of the appeal. All appeals shall be addressed within 30 working days from the receipt of the appeal and EQUALITAS shall provide the client with progress reports and the outcome.


5.5.1.3 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 EQUALITAS, 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 Impartiality Board (IB) for constituting the panel and taking the decision.

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

5.5.1.5 Based on the decision of the appeal panel EQUALITAS shall initiate appropriate correction and corrective action and the same recorded in FP-14-01, register for complaints, appeals & disputes.

5.5.1.6 EQUALITAS shall be 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 EQUALITAS shall also inform the appellant at this time about the closure of the appeal.

5.5.1.7 EQUALITAS shall ensure that the submission, investigation and decision on

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appeals shall not result in any discriminatory action against the appellant.

5.5.1.8 The right of the client to appeal against any decision by EQUALITAS is communicated at the time of sending the quotation.

5.5.1.9 Information about appeal handling process of EQUALITAS is made publicly available through web site.

5.5.2 Complaints

5.5.2.1 Information about complaint handling process of EQUALITAS is made publicly available through web site. 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.

5.5.2.2 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 EQUALITAS or to the certified client and its activities.

5.5.2.3 The complaints received are recorded in FP-14-01 and is acknowledged to the complainant. The managing director shall review the complaint to ascertain the seriousness and the genuineness of the complaint. EQUALITAS shall provide the complainant with progress reports and the outcome


5.5.2.4. The complaint redressal process:

5.5.2.4.1. Complaints about EQUALITAS from the client or third party

- a. Depending on the nature of the complaint, Chairman of the Impartiality Board 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 EQUALITAS,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 EQUALITAS 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, EQUALITAS shall inform 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 shall be taken by the chairman of the Impartiality Board.

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

- a. (a) EQUALITAS shall inform the client about the complaint received and ask the client to investigate the complaint and report the findings to EQUALITAS within two weeks from the date of receiving the complaint by the client.
- b. If EQUALITAS does not receive any response from the client or the action taken by the client is not found effective, EQUALITAS shall inform the client accordingly and ask for a special audit at the client site by EQUALITAS. On confirmation from the client EQUALITAS shall conduct a special audit as per EQUALITAS procedure and investigate the complaint.

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- c. If the complaint is of serious nature EQUALITAS shall initiate the special audit directly with the client
- d. As its policy, EQUALITAS shall not disclose the identity of the complainant to the client.
- e. If any action is needed to be taken by the client EQUALITAS shall verify 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 EQUALITAS shall inform the complainant accordingly and the complaint shall then be treated as closed.

5.5.2.5. EQUALITAS shall decide to make public the complaint and its resolution if agreed with client and complainant.

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

5.5.3 Client feed back

5.5.3.1 After every audit (certification, surveillance and re-certification) a feedback from the client is obtained in document FP-14-02, to assess,

1. EQUALITAS,s office responsiveness to client queries at various stages of the certification process

2. Performance of the audit team

3. Areas for further improvement

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

5.5.3.3 The actions taken are recorded in FP-14-02

5.5.3.4 A summary of feedback and the findings with corrective action taken are reviewed in MRM and (Impartiality Board) IB meeting.

5.5.4 Disputes

5.5.4.1. Any dispute arising out of EQUALITAS,s certification activities shall be settled by private negotiations between the parties.

5.5.4.2 Records of all the disputes are maintained and reviewed in MRM and IB meeting. EQUALITAS shall ensure that the submission, investigation and decision on complainee shall not result in any discriminatory action against the appellent.

5.5.4.3 Any valid complaint about a certified client shall also be referred by the CB to the certified client in question at an appropriate time.

6. Annexes

None

7. Forms

- Complaints and appeals Record. FP-14-01
- Evaluations and assessments Record.FP-14-02
- Corrective actions and improvements Record. FP-05-01

8. References

8.1. ISO 17021:2015.

8.2. ISO 22003-1:2022.

8.3. ISO 22003-2:2022.

8.4. ISO 17065:2012.

8.5. ISO 17024:2012.

8.6. ISO 17020:2012.