

1.0 Purpose

This procedure defines the process for receiving, evaluating, investigating, and resolving complaints and appeals related to VALIDA's proficiency testing (PT) activities, ensuring fair, transparent, and timely handling.

2.0 Scope

This procedure applies to all complaints and appeals submitted by participants, customers, or other stakeholders concerning VALIDA's PT schemes and related services.

3.0 Responsibility

3.1 Quality Manager is responsible for receiving, recording, and coordinating the handling of complaints and appeals.

3.2 Technical Manager is responsible for initiate appropriate actions if the compliant related to any technical issues and conclude the resolution process for complaints received from customers, participants, and other relevant parties.

4.0 Description of Activity

4.1 Receiving, substantiating and investigating the compliant

4.1.1 Upon receipt of a complaint/appeal, the Quality Manager record it in the Complaint/Appeal Report(if received verbal) and acknowledge receipt to the complainant, where possible. The complaint shall be reviewed to confirm whether it relates to VALIDA's PT activities.

4.1.2 If the complaint is related to PT activities, VALIDA proceed with investigation. The organization is responsible for gathering all necessary information to determine whether the complaint is substantiated. The investigation is conducted objectively and without bias, ensuring that no discriminatory actions occur during the process.

4.1.3 Based on the investigation results, appropriate actions are determined and implemented to resolve the complaint/appeal. These actions may include corrective actions, process improvements, or communication with affected parties.

The decision on the complaint /appeal is made, or reviewed and approved, by personnel who are independent of the subject of the complaint, ensuring impartiality.

4.1.4 VALIDA, whenever possible, keep the complainant/appellant informed about the progress of the investigation. Upon completion, the complainant shall be formally notified of the outcome and the closure of the complaint/appeal.

4.1.4 All complaints/appeals are documented and tracked, including details of:

- Complaint/appeal description
- Investigation process
- Actions taken
- Final decision

Records are maintained in accordance with the record control procedure.

4.2 Action taken to resolve complaints/appeals

4.2.1 Upon confirmation of a complaint or appeal, the responsible personnel shall initiate appropriate actions in accordance with QP/7.5.4 – Procedure for Non-conforming work. Immediate action shall be taken where necessary to address the issue, and all actions shall be completed within the defined timeframe.

4.2.2 Following implementation, the effectiveness of the actions taken is evaluated. If the actions do not successfully resolve the complaint or appeal, further measures will be identified and implemented. This process continue with ongoing reassessment until the complaint or appeal is fully resolved.

4.2.3 All stages of the complaint or appeal handling process are systematically tracked and documented. Records are maintained using the Complaint/Appeal Report Form (F/HCA/01) and the Non-conformity and corrective action report (F/NCW/01), ensuring traceability of actions taken and decisions made.

4.3 Closing of Complaints/appeals

4.3.1 All complaints and appeals received by VALIDA are resolved and closed within 3 months from the date of receipt, where practicable. The authority to review and approve closure rests with the Quality Manager or Technical Manager.

4.3.2 Upon successful resolution, and where no further action is required, the responsible personnel approve the relevant records, including the Complaint/Appeal Report (F/HCA/01) and the Non-conformity and corrective action report (F/NCW/01). The complainant or appellant is formally notified via email, detailing the outcome of the investigation and the actions taken by VALIDA to resolve the issue.

4.4 The procedure for handling complaints and appeals is included in VALIDA's general information provided to participants, customers, and relevant stakeholders. This ensures that the process is transparent, accessible, and publicly available, in accordance with ISO/IEC 17043 requirements.

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5.0 **Related Document**

5.1 (F/HCA/01) Complaint/Appeal Report.