

Document name	SOP for Management of Appeal
Document no	RCPL/Appeal/SOP/09
Initial Version No.1 Issue Date	01.10.2023
Review schedule	Annual
Revised version no: -	Revised Version issue date: -



**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE
FOR
MANAGEMENT OF APPEAL**

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ROBUST CERTIFICATIONS PVT. LTD.

Ref: ISO 17021-1:2015

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History of Review & Amendments

Review date / amendment date	Amendment No, if any	Old Version no., & issue date	Brief description about review and amendment	New version no. & issue date	Reviewed / approved by / Sign

Prepared by
Tech. ManagerApproved by
C E O – MAYANK SHARMA

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1.0 Purpose:

To lay down documented guidelines for handling and disposal of appeals received from our clients.

2.0 Scope:

This procedure is applicable over all activities related to receipt, handling and disposal of appeals (Lodged by the client) against audit conclusion and decision of the audit team of RCPL.

3.0 Reference: CI 9.7 of ISO 17021-1:2015**4.0 Terms & definitions:**

CB : Certification Body/ CAB/ RCPL/Robust certifications Pvt. Ltd.

CAB : Certification assessment body/ RCPL

CEO : Chief Executive Officer

RCPL: ROBUST CERTIFICATIONS PVT. LTD. Company, CB, CAB

5.0 Responsibility:

Impartiality committee. Tech. Manager and CEO

6.0 Authority:

This procedure is authorized by the CEO and can be amended only by him.

7.0 Procedure:**7.1 Definition of appeal:**

Written objections and reservation of audited clients against audit decision taken by the audit team.

7.2 Receipt of appeal: Since this relates to our core process there is a separate provision in our website for lodging appeal. As soon as any appeal is received from any client, acknowledgment of the same is sent to the client, promising more information to be provided regarding decisions on your appeal, within 3 working days. Associated records are maintained. Record of all appeals is maintained at least for 4 years.

Ref: Record of appeals

Impartiality committee is kept updated regarding appeal & subsequent action taken.

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7.3 Constitution of the Appeal management committee

To take appropriate action regarding Appeals, the CEO constitutes a 3 member committee consisting of the Tech. Manager + any one member of the Impartiality Committee member + a code competent auditor (who was not involved in the activities regarding which the appeal was raised.)

7.4 Decision making process

The CEO is the Ex-officio member and non-voting Chairperson of the Appeal management committee.

The three voting members decide about the merit of the appeal. The decision taken by the majority prevails. In case of any dispute a meeting of all members of the Impartiality committee is convened where again the issue is deliberated and a decision is taken on majority basis. In case of tie up decision of the chairperson prevails, and the CEO implements the decision.

A record of all appeals and decisions taken along with signature of the decision making members is maintained by the CAB/ Technical Manager.

7.5 Responsibilities of the Appeal management committee:

The appeal management committee is responsible for –

- Reviewing the appeal and appointing competent person to investigate it.
- Gathering relevant information from all available sources including the client, the audit team and other relevant persons
- Taking appropriate decision that may include –
 - Rejection of appeal being not viable
 - Ordering re-audit (by another auditor) restricted to areas regarding which appeal was made

7.6 Investigation of Appeal: The CEO/ designated officer/ auditor looks into appeals, and as per situation one or more of the following action is taken –

- i. Documentary evidence is requested from the client in support of their claim.
- ii. The concerned audit team against whose decision the appeal was lodged, is invited and appropriate enquiry is done.
- iii. Another auditor is deputed to conduct re audit of those aspects which caused dispute and appeal.

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7.7 Monitoring and tracking of the Appeal handling process:

Being the ultimate authority The CEO monitors and tracks action taken since receipt of the appeal, till closure of the process. It is ensured that persons involved in the dispute are not involved in making decisions related to the appeal.

Monitoring by Impartiality committee:

Information regarding lodging of appeal and subsequent action being taken by the Appeal management committee is – provided to all members of the Impartiality committee by E-mail. All cases of Appeal and complaints are necessarily reviewed by the impartiality committee during its 6 monthly review meeting.

7.8 Correction & corrective action:

Based upon additional information received after investigation, from multiple sources, the Appeal management committee takes appropriate decision and it is documented, and the same is communicated to the client. These decision may include –

- Rejection of appeal being not viable
- Ordering re-audit (by another auditor) restricted to areas regarding which appeal was made
- issue of advice/ asking for retraining of the auditor/ auditors

Associated records are maintained.

7.9 Updating of appellant:

The appellant is kept updated with progress in appeal handling process. All appeals are resolved or closed within 3 months of registration of the appeal. A formal appeal closure report is sent to the appellant stating all the actions taken, and final decision of the appeal handling authority.

The decision of the CEO is recorded in the Client's file. Summary of activities subsequent to appeal is recorded in a Register RCPL/Appeal/F-01. The record is retained for at least 4 years.

7.10 In case the client/ Appellant is not satisfied with the appeal handling process/ decision of the appeal management committee, to remove any suspicion of bias, RCPL allows the appellant to put forward his/ her case before the Impartiality committee. The CEO voluntarily forwards all resolved and unresolved cases of Appeals to the Impartiality Committee for their review and necessary guidance or instructions.

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An especial meeting of the Impartiality committee is convened and the appeal and related issues are deliberated and a final decision by the committee is taken and acted upon by RCPL. Record of such references and decision of the Impartiality committee is maintained in the Appeal file and also in the client's file. The appellant is again updated about the final decision taken by the Impartiality committee.

8.0 Where applicable Summary of all appeal cases and action taken thereof are forwarded to the accreditation board for information.

9.0 Records:

Record of appeals and its disposal RCPL/Appeal/F-01

Client file

MOM of the Impartiality Management committee

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