

# Accreditation Education Research & Scientific Service Center



## Procedure for Handling Customer Complaints

Reviewed by: CEO, AERSSC

Approved by: Conformity Assessment Accreditation Board of AERSSC

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## **Procedure for Handling Customer Complaints**

### **1. Policy:**

It is the policy of AERSSC that customer's complaints are assessed with top priority and will be utilized as opportunity for improvement by AERSSC.

### **2. Scope:**

This document describes the procedure for handling all complaints received by AERSSC from various sources like letters, emails, faxes, telephones or reports appearing in print media and references in electronic media against the quality of the services provided and personnel involved in accreditation process.

### **3. Objective:**

To define authority, responsibilities and quality system used to ensure that all customers complaints are received, documented, assessed and responded in a timely basis.

### **4. Responsibility:**

- 4.1 The CEO/Quality Manager will be responsible for allocating responsibilities for and reporting on complaints.
- 4.2 CEO is responsible for monitoring of complaints and is responsible for final decision on closure of complaints.
- 4.3 The CEO/Quality Manager is responsible for analyzing all the complaints and their outcome for possible trends and presenting them to the management review meeting.
- 4.4 The CEO is responsible for making decisions on disputes.
- 4.5 The AERSSC Appeals Committee will be responsible for making final decisions regarding appeals.

### **5. Definitions**

- 5.1 Complaint: Expression of dissatisfaction other than appeal by any person or organization to AERSSC relating to its activities, personnel and assessors/experts.

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- 5.2 Appeal: Request by a CAB to AERSSC for a consideration of an accreditation decision.
- 5.3 Customer Feedback: A compliment or complaint received from a person or organization relating to AERSSC's activities, personnel, assessors/experts.
- 4.6 Dispute: Complaints which have not been resolved through the AERSSC complaints handling system.

## 6. Procedure:

### 6.1 Investigation of Complaints:

Complaints received by AERSSC may broadly fall in to three categories:

- a) Complaints against CABs,
- b) Complaints against Quality of services provided by AERSSC,
- c) Complaints against officials involved in the Accreditation process.

Procedure for dealing with each category of complaints is in given sections 6.2.5 to 6.2.9.

### 6.2 Receipt of Complaints

6.2.1 AERSSC system will be open to receiving complaints against the quality of the services provided and personnel involved in accreditation process.

6.2.2 All complaints relating to an organization accredited by AERSSC will be referred to the accredited organization. Only when the accredited organization has not been able to resolve the complaint, it will be referred to AERSSC.

6.2.3 All complaints received in AERSSC will be channeled to the CEO and it will be treated as confidential unless otherwise required by law. Arrangements will be made by CEO to maintain records pertaining to all complaints covering date of receipt, date of acknowledgement, action taken, date of closure or final disposal and decisions taken.

6.2.4 Within a week of registering the complaint, complainant will be acknowledged with the assurance that AERSSC will be informing the outcome within a reasonable period of time.

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6.2.5 Within a week of conducting the investigation of complaint, the CEO/Quality Manager will notify the complainant in writing about the outcome of the investigation.

6.2.6 If a complaint is outside the scope of AERSSC activities or information provided in the complaint is inadequate for any meaningful follow-up, the complaint will be treated as closed by informing the complainant.

### 6.3 Procedure for dealing with complaints against CAB's

6.3.1 The CEO/Quality manager where appropriate will give opportunity to the CAB to address the complaint before further investigation.

6.3.2 The CEO/Quality Manager will place the findings of the investigation to the Board, along with the recommendation on action to be taken against the CAB. The CEO if necessary may consult the Expert and take a decision.

6.3.3 The complainant will be informed about the decision by AERSSC.

### 6.4 Procedure for dealing with complaints against Quality of services provided by AERSSC

6.4.1 When the complaint is against an Assessor or Accreditation Committee member, a panel will be appointed comprising a Member of the Board, a Member of an Accreditation Committee and CEO who may have knowledge about the matter contained in the complaint. The Committee may seek clarification from the concerned CAB.

6.4.2 In extreme case the decision may involve disciplinary action against the concerned AERSSC staff member as per staff rules and regulation. In the case of Assessor or Accreditation Committee Member deletion of the assessor from the empanelled list or removal of Accreditation Committee member from the committee, will be considered with approval of the Board.

6.4.3 If the complaint is against the CEO, AERSSC, then the Chairman AERSSC will handle the complaint under the guidance of the Board.

6.4.4 The complainant will be informed about the outcome of the complaint.

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## 7. Disputes and Appeals

- 7.1 Disputes will be brought to the attention of the CEO.
- 7.2 The CEO/Quality Manager will be responsible for resolution.
- 7.3 Appeals from organization on accreditation decisions will be in writing and shall be forwarded to the CEO within 3 month of the course of appeal.
- 7.4 If the appeal is not valid, the appellant will be notified accordingly by the CEO/Quality Manager within four (4) weeks from the date of receipt of the appeal.
- 7.5 Within a week of registering the appeal, the CEO/Quality Manager will forward a confirmation of receipt of the appeal and advise the appellant that the appeal is being handled by the Appeals committee.
- 7.6 The decision of the Appeals Committee will be communicated to the appellant within two (2) weeks of judgment.

## 8. Reporting on Complaints and Other Related Actions

- 8.1 As an outcome of investigation of complaint and root cause analysis if any corrective action is felt necessary the same will be initiated by CEO in line with the requirements of procedure for corrective action.
- 8.2 All records pertaining to complaints will be maintained up to date by the Officer assigned by the CEO for the purpose. The status of complaints will be reported to the CEO, AERSSC, who is responsible for monitoring of complaints. After completion of the investigation process with satisfactory actions taken on each complaint, the complaint will be closed out and accordingly the complaints register will be updated.
- 8.3 The CEO/Quality manager will analyze all the complaints and their outcome for possible trend. The complaints received, handling of complaints and the corrective actions taken will be discussed as one of the agenda items in the management review meeting at the Board. The analysis of complaints will be placed before Board in accordance with Management review procedure.

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8.4 Complaints file maintained by the staff officer designated by CEO where all correspondence in respect of complaints received, decisions by CEO/Chairman and any other relevant documents are filed in chronological order.

**9. Reference documents:**

- 9.1 Complaints Register
- 9.2 Complaints Handling Form
- 9.3 Complaints File
- 9.3 Procedure for Corrective Action
- 9.4 Procedure for Management review

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