



**TITLE: Complaints/Compliments/Non-Conformities**

**NUMBER: SP 004**

**OWNER: Lorna Myers**

### **Introduction**

The Operations Director/Administrator is responsible for maintaining the Complaints/Compliments/Non-Conformities Register for Worldwide Quality Assurance. This procedure, explains the process of handling Complaints / Compliments / Non-Conformities and how they are recorded.

### **Purpose**

The Complaints/Compliments/Non-Conformities system is the way in which we derive maximum benefit from any criticism about ourselves or our clients for analysis. If necessary, corrective action and improvement actions are implemented. The system is based on the use of form's WQA 16 and WQA 16a. To avoid conflicts of interests in this process any issues raised against the Directors or certification body issues will be referred to the Management Committee for resolution. Records of such issues will be maintained as per this procedure.

### **1 Definitions**

The following terms have been used in this procedure:

#### **Complaint**

A specific criticism of the way in which we, or our clients, have behaved or acted in respect of product or service provided and possible misrepresentation through the misuse of certification or logos.

#### **Complainer**

Can be a third party individual / organisation, or certified client informing us of the complaint.

#### **Disputes**

An unresolved disagreement relating to certification or non-conformance(s), that is reported to WQA for resolution by an independent source.

#### **Nominee**

The WQA / independent person best positioned to take the necessary action.



## **2 Complaint/ Disputes Handling Process**

### **Receipt**

All recipients of complaints and reported disputes must be recorded on the Complaint Form WQA 16 and forwarded to the Operations Director/Administrator for recording on the complaints register.

### **Acknowledgement**

A formal acknowledgement to the complainer is sent within 3 working days by the Operations Director.

### **Allocation**

For complaints against WQA's clients the nominee will be the Operations Director.

### **Actioning Complaint/Dispute**

The nominee speaks to the complainer/ client within 3 working days to:

- ensure that the complainer has already logged their complaint in writing to the client/ certification body, if this is not self evident from the correspondence.
- talk through the complaint/dispute
- establish whether the complainer is happy for their name to be disclosed
- advise of next step and timescale

Nominee investigates the complaint/dispute and

- makes a judgement whether additional visit to client is required.
- where a visit is required, the nominee is to arrange a visit within a 20 day period, that is convenient to both parties.
- nominee to inform the complainer of progress, with copy to Operations Director.



### **Completion**

On completion of the investigation, the nominee speaks to Complainer and:-

- feeds back conclusion
- ensures complainer understands WQA limitation of role for Customer complaints against clients
- gains acceptance to the resolution

### **Closure**

The nominee must write a confirmation letter of response to the complainer and copy this to the Operations Director. The response letter must address the detail's of the complainers complaint/ dispute.

The nominee completes internal complaint/dispute paperwork. Nominee ensures any further auditing of client at next assessment visit is logged on the Client File by indicating this action at Corrective Action Section on the Complaint form.

Nominee ensures any required internal action is logged using appropriate corrective action process and the relevant number entered on the complaints form. Confirm on form WQA 16 that this has been done.

#### **NOTE:**

**the complaint cannot be closed unless these follow-up actions are recorded, all paperwork complete and forwarded to the OD for closure on the Register.**

If not fully completed it will be returned for amendments. The date of closure on the system will be the date of the response letter or within the same calendar month.

A Copy of the Complaint Form and closure letter is to be sent to filing for inclusion in the client file.

### **Appendix**

We have a contractual requirement to maintain confidentiality of our knowledge of our clients' business which is paramount. The contractual clause states:

"WQA, its staff and agents shall keep confidential all information relating to your business and shall not disclose any such information to any third party, except that in the public domain" effectively we can say nothing that is not publicly known.



Therefore, there are usually only two options for answering the complaint:

- i) if we believe the complaint is not justified, the suggested sentence is:  
"I am satisfied that the company have followed their procedures for customer complaints/corrective actions and that their routines comply with the requirements of ISO 9000"
- ii) if we believe the Customers' complaint against our client is justified, the suggested sentences are:  
"We are satisfied that any corrective actions required are progressed under the quality system and we shall monitor these during our normal schedule of continuing assessment visits".

Any investigation we undertake need only be sufficient as to establish which of the above should apply. This may or may not require a visit to the client. If one is deemed appropriate, the Operations Director should arrange the visit, although it need not be undertaken by the Operations Director.

**OD Procedure:**

- creation of electronic complaint file
- creation of Reports:
  - over 4 months old (Chase up)
  - trends
  - statistics
  - compliments
- archiving when files are complete

**Capture of Complaints**

All compliment letters or telephone calls should be forwarded to the Operations Director/Administrator for recording in the clients file.

**Records**

Records are retained for three years.



### **Non-Conformities From Internal Audits.**

As a result of internal quality audits there may be non conformities raised. These non-conformities are considered with the same level of importance with regard to corrective and preventive action as customer complaints. Such non conformances will be dealt with by the general corrective/preventive action system that follows.

### **NON-CONFORMITIES**

#### **Purpose**

This procedure defines the measures to be taken to remedy a non-conformity and eliminate the causes to prevent recurrence.

The OD is responsible for:

- recording the non-conformity
- issuing Corrective/ Preventive action (CAP)
- monitoring actions taken and the effectiveness
- raising all corrective actions identified by Internal Audit, External Audit, Complaint, Appeal, Concession or other.

#### **Scope**

To ensure that all-necessary changes to WQA quality systems are recorded and implemented.

#### **Procedure**

Most corrective actions are recorded and expedited to completion by existing procedures, however actions may be necessary following Internal Audits, Complaints, Appeals or Concessions.

Each such corrective action is registered and its clearance recorded using the Corrective Action register.



## **Request**

Non-Conformance Report form WQA 16a are raised when:

- non-conformities are raised and need to be addressed.
- normal methods to resolve the problem are exhausted or are seen as inappropriate.
- The person making the request includes possible corrective actions to try.

## **Record**

The NCR is returned to the Operations Director/Administrator and allocated a unique number.

The Complaints/Compliments/Non-Conformities Register holds the requests and records the following data:

- the reference number
- date
- client reference
- details of issue
- responsible persons
- target data for completion

The NCR is forwarded to the appropriate process or system owner.

## **Actioning the request**

The Process or system owner is responsible for investigating the perceived problem and identifying and implementing both Corrective/ Preventive actions.

## **Sign off**

The Originator is responsible for signing off corrective action requests relating to internal problems/improvements and non-conformities following completion. All sections of the form are to be completed, inappropriate sections are to be identified as such.

The Register is maintained as a current listing of outstanding action to be completed and revised quarterly.

Completed Form WQA 16a is retained for 2 years.



**Analysis of corrective and preventive actions**

An assessment of the actions taken to correct and prevent complaints, disputes and appeals will be carried out periodically by the Operations Director/Administrator. The aim of the assessment is to analyse the effectiveness of actions taken for possible trends and continuous improvement within the process.