

PROCESS FOR MANAGEMENT OF COMPLAINT AND APPEAL

**Pakistan National Accreditation council**

Ministry of Science & Technology

Islamabad

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AMENDEMENT/CHANGE RECORD

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| **Rev.** | **Date** | **Description of change** | **Prepared by** | **Checked by** | **Approved by** |
| 00 | 01/01/2024 | Changes proposed by APAC PE (Clause 5 & 6) | QMR | DDG | DG |
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# Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to maintain a documented process for handling all types of complaints and appeals received by PNAC.

# Scope

The scope covers all complaints and appeals received from all interested parties and stakeholders including the CABs.

# References

ISO/IEC 17011 clause 7

# Procedure Owner:

The Quality Management Representative (QMR) is the Procedure owner.

# Procedure for complaint handling

* 1. Any citizen of Pakistan can launch a complaint through Prime Miniter of Pakistan Citizen Portal, link available on PNAC website. Director General PNAC is the focal person for Prime Miniter of Pakistan Citizen Portal.
  2. PNAC is responsible for all decisions at all levels of the handling process for complaints
  3. A complaint can be made against any action, service or employee/personnel engaged by PNAC or its accredited CAB. The complaint can be received by any official of PNAC and referred to QMR. The QMR logs the complaint in the relevant file, fills out the F-08/01 form and suggest a designated person on the form, with the approval of DG, to handle the complaint. Complaint with incorrect/incomplete address or anonymous will not be entertained.
  4. Upon receipt of a complaint, PNAC confirms whether the complaint relates to accreditation activities that it is responsible for and have a right to accept or reject the compliant.
  5. PNAC ensures that a complaint concerning an accredited Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) is first addressed by the CAB. The concerned PM will communicate the complaint to the CAB and submit the outcome to the compliant committee / officer (s).
  6. The designated officer (s) will ask the complainant to submit the objective evidence within 30 days to support his allegations, failing which PNAC will not entertain the complaint.
  7. The designated officer (s) / QMR will track and record complaints, including actions undertaken to resolve the complaint.
  8. The designated officer (s) collects all the relevant information, thoroughly investigate the complaint, and suggest corrective action if any, on F-08/01, for approval of DG. The investigation may involve reviewing documents, interviewing involved parties, or other investigative methods such as visit of the CAB with or without informing to the CAB.
  9. The designated officer (s) /QMR will ensure that any appropriate action is taken in a timely manner.
  10. The designated officer (s) will inform the complainant and all other relevant quarters regarding the outcome of the complaint.
  11. PNAC ensures that the complaint is handled by independent and impartial personnel (s) not involved in the activities in question.
  12. QMR will summarise all client complaints and subsequent resolution for Management Review Meeting.

# Procedure for Appeal Handling

* 1. A CAB wishing to appeal against any decision ofPNAC and/or its authorised personnelshould do so, within 28 days of being officially informed of such a decision. The appeal should be submitted to QMR with a copy to DG. The QMR registers the case in the file.
  2. The QMR, will arrange for an acknowledgement to be sent to the appellant within 7 working days of the appeals receipt.
  3. The QMR will collate all the available information and background to the events that led up to the appeal, and if necessary (because the facts are not clear or incomplete) to the appellant. A record of these discussions will be made and appended/attached to the Form for Handling Appeals F 07/01.
  4. The complete case will be forwarded to the appeal committee comprising of one or more members preferably outside PNAC.
  5. In case the appellant would still pursue with the appeal the DG may formulate an appeal committee comprising of one or more members within or outside PNAC, independent of the case to assess.
  6. The members of the committee shall be competent and independent of the subject of the appeal.
  7. The QMR will inform the members of the committee and arrange to convene the meeting of the appeal committee.
  8. The first meeting of the Appeal Committee will be held within 30 clear days of receipt of the notification of appellant’s intention. The appellant will be given at least 7 working days’ notice before the date set for appeal hearing, by fax and registered letter, stating the time and place of such a hearing. At hearing of the appeal, the appellant will be entitled to appear in person or give a written submission, but legal representation will not be accepted or allowed.
  9. Approach by an appellant to any member of the Appeal Committee, or to any member of PNAC’s staff, concerning an appeal may cause the appeal to be disallowed without a hearing.
  10. The Appeal Committee will hear both sides and arrive at a decision. The Director General or his nominee will present in confidence the evidence and reason for the specific decision at that time, which is disputed by the appellant. In case the appellant is not present to defend his case the committee may take a decision on the basis of documents and evidence available at their disposal.
  11. The designated officer (s) / QMR will track and record appeal, including actions undertaken to resolve the appeal.
  12. The designated officer (s) /QMR /DG/DDG will ensure that any appropriate action is taken in a timely manner.
  13. The appeal committee may be convened more than once on the same issue. The majority decision of the Appeal Committee is declared by its Chairman (if available), which is final, conclusive and binding on both parties. PNAC is responsible for all decisions at all levels of the handling process for appeals.
  14. If the appeal committee make recommendations in favour of the appellant, the Director General in consultation with the QMR and the concerned Directors will take appropriate action to implement the decision of the appeal committee.
  15. QMR notes down the minutes of the meeting(s). The draft minutes are sent by QMR to Chairman Appeal committee for approval. QMR issue the minutes.
  16. QMR will notify the appellant about the decision of PNAC, within 15 working days from the date of the decision and may give formal notice of the end of the appeals handling process to the appellant.
  17. If the appellant is still not satisfied, the case could be forwarded to the regional or international relevant apex bodies such as IAF/PAC, ILAC/APLAC, SMIIC, IHAF for their input. The appellant shall not have further right of appeal on the same grounds and for the same issue/dispute.
  18. PNAC bears no liability for loss, damage or loss of earnings arising from the decision that is being disputed.

**7. Associated Documentation**

1. Complaint Form
2. Form for Handling Appeals
3. The written appeal from the appellant
4. The written acknowledgement from PNAC
5. The minute of the Appeal Committee meeting
6. The written statement to the Appeal Committee Chairman
7. The notification of Appeals Committee decision
8. The letter from the Director General, stating PNAC decision to resolve the issue
9. The written objection from the appellant against the composition of the appeal's committee.