

Indian Register Quality Systems
(A Division of IRCLASS Systems and Solutions Private Limited)
Operational Procedures Manual
Issue No. 2

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION, APPEALS, COMPLAINTS AND
DISPUTES HANDLING PROCESS

III IRQS - OPM : 28 : 01

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Eff. Dt. : 17 April 2017

Developed By : NR
Approved By : DH - IRQS

A. Purpose :

To define a procedure to ensure that request for information, appeal, complaints and disputes with clients or any interested party are promptly dealt with.

B. Scope : Applicable to all services provided by IRQS.

C. Cross Reference : ISO 17021-1

D. Process Owner : Head-Operations / Nominated Representative

E. Responsibilities : Nominated Representative / Divisional Head - IRQS

F. Process Measurement : Time taken for resolving the complaints

G. Process Description :

1. General:

Request for information, Appeals, complaints and disputes brought to the notice of IRQS are promptly dealt with and remain confidential. Information about the client from sources other than the client are kept confidential. This procedure is applicable to decisions pertaining to certification including maintenance.

It is ensured that personnel including those acting in managerial capacity are not employed to investigate any Request for information, appeal, complaint or dispute if they have been directly involved in the activities towards the Organization or any other party involved in the appeal, complaint or dispute in question within the certification cycle.

It is ensured that submission, investigation and decision on appeals and complaints shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant / complainant.

In situations where appeals or complaints cannot be resolved by Nominated Representative or the Divisional Head – IRQS, the same shall be referred to QSC vide Management Representative.

A summary of Request for information, appeals / complaints received, actions taken/completed is presented in the Management Review meeting. Actions as decided in the Management Review meeting are implemented for further effectiveness.

2. Request for information

Any person can Request for information over telephone or through writing or through IRQS website. Process of Request for information through website is as given below:

Login to www.irqs.co.in – homepage go to – clientele – you will get ‘Want to know more about our client certification’ – fill up the details as requested – click it on submit – requested information e-mail will be received to IRQS. Requested information will be replied to respective personnel through e-mail.

For information about Certification & Training : Login to www.irqs.co.in – homepage go to Inquire Now – Fill up the details & submit.

3. Appeals:

2.1 “Appeal” means "any request for review that is conveyed in writing or uploaded through the web-link,

against a decision made by IRQS taking into consideration the explanation provided by the client". This may be either during the course of audit at the client's premises or any work pertaining to H.O.

- 2.2 Appeals can be due to:
 - 2.2.1 refusal of an audit by IRQS;
 - 2.2.2 non acceptance of scope of certification;
 - 2.2.3 Decisions made on misuse, suspension, withdrawal, cancellation, extending and reducing the certification;
 - 2.2.4 Failure to recommend certification by IRQS;
 - 2.2.5 Notification by any third party/interested party against the grant of certification by IRQS.
- 2.3 Any appeal from client or interested parties seeking redressal when received is recorded and acknowledged by Divisional Head-IRQS or Nominated Representative. The appeal should contain all available documentary evidence. Any such appeals referred to management are examined in fairness and reviewed by Nominated Representative and any other personnel as required either separately or jointly. The appellant may be asked to withdraw the appeal if found not relevant. Actions shall be initiated by Nominated Representative for resolving the appeals within a stipulated period of 3 months.
- 2.4 Resolution of Appeal shall be handled in the following manner:
 - 2.4.1 An attempt is made by the team leader to resolve the issue at the audit site
 - 2.4.2 If the appeal is not resolved, the matter is taken upto Nominated Representative then Divisional Head –IRQS and finally Management Representative
 - 2.4.3 In case the Management Representative is unable to resolve the appeal, the same shall be referred, with all information (including documentary evidence) to the Quality Sub Committee.
- 2.5 Nominated Representative tracks and maintains a record of all appeals along with remedial actions pertaining to the certification system and keeps the appellant updated about the progress and outcome.
- 2.6 Nominated Representative identifies problems requiring any actions to prevent recurrence of the above for corrective action (and preventive action if required) commensurate with the nature and risk involved. These include measures such as:
 - 2.6.1 Restoring conformity to the certification system process
 - 2.6.2 Assessing the effectiveness of remedial/corrective actions taken.
- 2.7 A formal notice of conclusion of the appeal handling process shall be provided to the appellant.

4. Complaints:

- 3.1 Normally complaints i.e. dissatisfaction expressed verbally or through writing or uploaded through the web-link by a person or by the Organization to IRQS – HO /Survey Station. However, when any Survey Station receives any complaint, it is passed on to Nominated Representative. Any complaint received by IRQS, whether it pertains to IRQS functions or the certified Organization, would be treated in all seriousness and investigated. These complaints are recorded by Divisional Head-IRQS or Nominated Representative and the complainant would be informed of the receipt of complaint and advised on the investigation required within a reasonable time.
- 3.2 Nominated Representative initiates actions for resolving & restoring conformity to Management System and for closing the complaint within three months from the date of receipt of complaint unless delayed for a specific reason. The results and actions taken/completed are informed accordingly to the concerned parties.
- 3.3 For complaints received against certified Organizations, Nominated Representative may decide to:
 - 3.3.1 Advise the controlling office of IRQS for a reference to the client based on which a visit / audit may be planned for ascertaining the actions taken and ensuring effectiveness of the certified management system.
 - 3.3.2 Advise verification of actions taken during forth-coming surveillance audit.
- 3.4 Any such complaints referred to management are examined in fairness and reviewed by Nominated Representative and any other personnel as required either separately or jointly. The complainant may be asked to withdraw the complaint if found not relevant. A complaint after the date on which it has been received, is to be dealt with, within three months.
- 3.5 Resolution of Complaint shall be handled in the following manner:

- 3.5.1 An attempt is made by the team leader to resolve the issue at the audit site, which is recorded subsequently in the complaint log.
- 3.5.2 If the complaint is not resolved, the matter is taken upto Nominated Representative, who analyses and initiates correction, corrective action / preventive action in co-ordination with Divisional Head – IRQS and Management Representative.
- 3.5.3 In case the group (NR, Divisional Head-IRQS and MR) is unable to resolve the complaint, the same shall be referred, with all the information (including documentary evidence) to the Quality Sub Committee.
- 3.6 Nominated Representative tracks and maintains a record of all complaints along with remedial actions pertaining to the certification system and keeps the complainant updated about the progress and outcome.
- 3.7 Nominated Representative identifies actions to prevent recurrence of the above for corrective action (and preventive action if required) commensurate with the nature and risk involved. These include measures such as:
 - 3.7.1 Notification to appropriate authorities as required by regulation
 - 3.7.2 Restoring conformity to certification system process
 - 3.7.3 Preventing recurrence;
 - 3.7.4 Evaluating and mitigating any adverse incidents (including hazards, safety & security) and their associated risks and impacts
 - 3.7.5 Ensuring satisfactory interaction with other components of the Management System.
 - 3.7.6 Assessing the effectiveness of remedial/corrective actions taken.
- 3.8 In case of complaints relevant to public interest, the certified organization and the complainant shall be consulted and if felt necessary information about the complaint and its resolution will be made available for public viewing.
- 3.9 A formal notice of conclusion shall be provided to the complainant.

5. Disputes:

Disputes here convey disagreement and are applicable to certification process decisions made during the course of audit including document adequacy.

The team leader is authorized to resolve the dispute and conclude the audit effectively.

The dispute if not resolved adequately by the team leader can be brought to the notice of Nominated Representative (NR) as an appeal. The NR shall resolve the matter through the appeal handling process. Any such disputes of significant nature as decided by the team leader are communicated in writing to NR.

6. Reference to Quality Sub-Committee (QSC):

- 5.1 The Quality Sub-Committee meetings are convened as described in III:IRQS:OPM:05.
- 5.2 A summary of appeals, complaints and disputes is reviewed, as part of routine agenda, in all QSC meetings for adequacy of actions taken and for any suggested improvements.
- 5.3 During the course resolution of any appeals, complaints and disputes if a decision is made to refer specially to QSC, this aspect will be specifically reviewed .If required a special session is convened.
- 5.4 At least three members of the Quality Subcommittee (Appeals committee) will have to be present when the appeal, complaint or dispute is taken up and none of them would have any interest in the party making the appeal, complaint or dispute. In case an appellant submits to IRQS motivated objections in writing against a certain member, this member during the duration of appeal, shall be withdrawn in favor of a substitute, if the objection is judged to be valid.
- 5.5 The decision of the Quality Sub-committee shall be final and binding on both parties. The same shall be communicated to the concerned parties and decision implemented.

H. **Records** : Register of Customer Complaints and Appeals

I. **Formats**: Customer Complaints and Appeals

J. Revision History:

Rev. No.	Effective Date	Details
01	17-04-2017	Updated the Title of the chapter 'Request for information' Added at point no. 2