



1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

2. This document outlines that procedure to be followed when an Accredited Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) wishes to complaint or to appeal a decision of ABA Assessors, ABA Staff or ABA Accreditation Committee members.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Consistent with ABA’s Policy Manual and ISO/IEC 17011, when an Accredited Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) desires to complain or to appeal a decision which impacts or may impact its accredited status, the CAB is afforded the right to formally express dissatisfaction or appeal the decision in a manner that is fair and expedient as it is described below.

4. PROCEDURE

a. Reception of Complaints or Appeals

When Accredited CABs desires to express dissatisfaction or appeal a decision of an ABA Assessor, ABA Accreditation Manager, or ABA Accreditation Committee member, they should formally communicate their intent to the Executive Director, via a letter signed by the CAB’s authorized representative no later than 30 days after notification to the CAB of the decision or action. The letter can be submitted by regular mail, e-mail, or through the ABA’s website, which provides ways for the public submission of complaints/appeals.

When submitting the complaints/appeals, the Accredited CAB must be explicit concerning the specific issue, finding or decision which is being complained or appealed, referring as appropriate to the evidence and the requirements that apply. It should have at least the following information:

- Name of CAB, phone number, and e-mail address of the complainant or appellant
- Reference to the accreditation standard, policy, or procedure allegedly infringed
- A description of the issues
- Support evidence

Regardless of the results of the investigation of the complaint or the resolution of an appeal, the complainant and the appellant, as well ABA shall cover their costs.

b. Validation of Complaints or Appeals



The Accreditation Manager initially reviews the complaints/appeals to determine its validity by the assurance that the information submitted is according to section a). This validation is not a decision on the merits of the complaints/appeals, but rather only a determination that it can proceed to an investigation. Follow this accreditation manager will promptly acknowledge, in writing, the receipt of valid complaints/appeals to CAB, and assign a tracking number to record it. This first stage review shall not exceed 30 days.

If the complaint/appeal is not valid, the accreditation manager will inform the complainant/appellant, in writing, and allow it thirty (30) days to supply the missing information. If the required information is not submitted within that time or does not establish validity, the complaints/appeals will be closed and the complainant/appellant so notified in writing.

c. Investigation of Complaints or Appeals

The Accreditation Manager will work with the Executive Director to arrange an investigation into the allegations in a valid complaint/appeal. Depending on the nature of the allegations in the complaint/appeal, the investigation may be carried out either by the accreditation manager or by an Investigation Working Group (IWG). Members of the IWG are screened for conflicts of interest.

The identity of the IWG members are provided to the complainant/appellant, who has the right to request the replacement of any proposed member who has a conflict of interest. This request must be submitted in writing to the Accreditation Manager within ten days.

The accreditation manager or IWG effectuate an investigation of the complaint/appeal and seek a solution to the topics involved.

When the investigation finished, a written report is submitted regarding the complaint/appeal to the executive director indicating the analysis that was carried out, and the recommendations regarding the resolution of the complaint/appeal.

If the investigation takes place more than thirty (30) days after a valid complaint/appeal is acknowledged, the accreditation manager will provide periodic reports to the complainant/appellant on the status of the investigation.

At the request of the Accredited CAB, a complaint/appeal can be escalated to the second stage of review at the Accreditation Committee. There is a US\$ 1,000 fee associated with the second stage escalation. The Accreditation Committee reviews shall be completed within 30 days.



d. Decision on complaints or appeals

The Executive Director, in consultation with the Accreditation Committee, will decide if the recommendations proposed by the accreditation manager or IWG are satisfactory to resolve the issue. Once reviewed and approved, the recommendation report is communicated in writing, to the complainant/appellant through the accreditation manager, who will maintain and safeguard the resulting records.

For the second stage escalation, if the complaint/appeal is found to have merited such that the original decision is overturned, then US\$500 shall be refunded or credited to the CAB. If the complaint/appeal is unjustified, the advance fee will not be refunded to the CAB.

5. RECORDS:

ABA Staff shall maintain the following accreditation process records:

- Initial Formal Complaint/ Appeal letter from the Accredited CAB
- Recommendation Report approved by Executive Director (Stage 1)
- Disposition by Accreditation Committee Stage 2 (If Applicable)

6. APPROVAL AND CHANGE HISTORY

DATE	CHANGE	MOST RECENT APPROVAL