	Work Instruction	Complaints and Appeals		Document #: WI-9.8
		Process owner CD	Approved By PRES	Issue date: 8/8/2023

1 Purpose and Scope

PURPOSE

This work instruction establishes a system for handling a client complaint or appeal regarding the GMS Auditing and Certification process or a decision made involving the clients certification status.

SCOPE

This applies to all formal Complaints and Appeals received.

2 Responsibility

The Certification Director (CD) is responsible for ensuring all complaints and appeals are recorded and reviewed by the Certification Committee.

The CD or designee is responsible for investigating complaints.

The Certification Committee is responsible for reviewing appeals.

3 Procedures

3.1. Complaints

3.1.1. Complaints must be received no later than 30 days of the occurrence and will be handled justly. All complaints are logged on the Complaint and Appeals Log (QF-9.8.1) by GMS Office personnel and the original is given to the CD to be filed in the client binder. GMS will acknowledge receipt of the complaint via email within 3-5 business days.

3.1.2. The CD or designee investigates the complaint interviewing GMS personnel or customer personnel as needed, as well as reviewing any appropriate documentation. All Investigation findings are documented in the Complaints and Appeals Report (QF-9.8.2) as well as the QF-9.8.1. This includes any corrective actions to be undertaken that may result from the complaint. The completed QF-9.8.2 is communicated to the customer by email no later than 30 days from the reception of the complaint by the CD or any other personnel not involved in the inspection.


3.1.3. If a Corrective Action results from the complaint the client will be notified of the results. Corrective Actions are handled per QSP-10.3.7 Corrective Action using Corrective Action Report.

3.1.4. If the client does not agree with the results of the investigation or Corrective Action the client may file an appeal.

3.2. Appeals

3.2.1. If a client disagrees with a decision made by a GMS employee, auditor, or committee the client must submit that appeal in writing.

3.2.2. The CD or designee logs the complaint on the Complaints and Appeals Log QF-9.8.1 and files it in the client binder.

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- 3.2.3. The appeal is brought to a member of the Certification Committee not involved in the original activity who thoroughly and independently reviews the issue. The committee member is asked to look over previous Complaint paperwork, but to rely on his/her own investigation and creates a QF-9.8.2.
- 3.2.4. Investigation and decision on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions.
- 3.2.5. The committee member's decision is noted on QF-9.8.1 and the client is sent the completed QF-9.8.2 by email and by registered mail if requested along with an Appeals Letter.
- 3.2.6. If the client accepts the decision, the client is expected to initiate the appropriate action. The CD logs client acceptance on the QF-9.8.1. Once the action is finalized the CD logs the appeal closure on the Complaints and Appeals Log. The CD logs client acceptance on the QF-9.8.1. If the client wishes to formally appeal the decision, the appeal is sent to the Impartiality Committee which will review the issue including contacting all related parties.
- 3.2.7. The Impartiality Committee's decision is noted on the QF-9.8.1 and the client is sent the QF-9.8.2.
- 3.2.8. If the client accepts the decision, the client is expected to initiate the appropriate action. The CD logs client acceptance on the QF-9.8.1.
- 3.2.8. The client may choose to initiate arbitration through the American Arbitration Association at their own expense.

g4 References

4.1 Related Procedures

Auditing and Certification Process	PM-9.2
Probation, Withdrawal and Cancellation	QSP-9.6
Corrective Action	QSP-10.3.6

4.2 Reference Documents

None

5 Records

Complaints and Appeals Log	QF-9.8.1
Complaints and Appeals Record	QF-9.8.2
Client Appeal Letter	
Client Complaint Letter	
GMS Complaint/Appeal Response Letter	