

GLOBAL ACCREDITATION
COOPERATION INCORPORATED
LOGO

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING DISPUTES, COMPLAINTS, AND APPEALS

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FURTHER INFORMATION

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 This document outlines the process for handling disputes, complaints, and appeals in Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated.

1.1.2 Maintaining the confidentiality, efficacy and integrity of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated processes are significant objectives when dealing with disputes, complaints, and appeals. This document ensures that all Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated members and related parties are supported by a fair and effective process.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 Definitions

1.2.1.1 A complaint is a formal expression of dissatisfaction, other than an appeal, regarding Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated's activities, policies and/or procedures, its service to clients, its members or its members' services to their customers, where a response is expected. Complaints may also relate to the clients of members' customers when related to the accredited service provided by the member.

1.2.1.2 By definition of the Incorporated Societies Act 2022, disputes relate to disagreements, conflicts or complaints between Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated, Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Members or Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Officers.

1.2.1.3 An appeal is a formal and documented request for a decision made by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated General Assembly or the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee to be reconsidered.

1.2.2 This document covers all disputes, complaints, and appeals as defined above.

1.2.3 When a complaint is other than a complaint against Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated or a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated member, the role of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated is to ensure the process to investigate the complaint by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated member or the conformity assessment body accredited by a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated accreditation body member has been conducted appropriately and transparently in accordance with their published complaint handling process. This document does not provide complainants with an alternative or extended route to the complaint handling process of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated members or conformity assessment bodies accredited by a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated accreditation body member, or require Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated to repeat a complaint investigation already carried out by others.

1.2.4 In accordance with the Incorporated Societies Act 2022, Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-GOV-001 (*Constitution*) provides procedures for Dispute Resolution. This document supplements and expands on the procedures given in Schedule 1 of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-GOV-001. For the avoidance of doubt, Schedule 1 of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-GOV-001 takes precedence over any procedures defined in this document.

1.2.5 This document does not cover appeals against adverse decisions on signatory status to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA).

1.2.6 Disputes, complaints, or appeals shall only be considered by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated if submitted to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary in writing in English.

2. GENERAL

- 2.1 The confidentiality, independence and impartiality of all those involved in dealing with disputes, complaints or appeals shall be maintained at all times. All those persons involved shall have signed the declaration in Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-FMS-005 (*Declaration of Confidentiality*).
- 2.2 Regardless of the outcome of any dispute, complaint or appeal process, all parties involved shall each meet their own costs.
- 2.3 If required, Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated has a process to be applied for persistent, unreasonable or hostile enquiries. Details are given in Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-MS-005 (*Process for Persistent, Unreasonable and Hostile Enquiries*).
- 2.4 An informative summary of the dispute and complaint handling outlined in this document is given in Annex A.

3. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

- 3.1 When a dispute occurs between Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated, Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Members or Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Officers, in accordance with Article 12 of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-GOV-001 (*Constitution*) the aggrieved party raising the dispute, and the Executive Committee, shall first consider and discuss whether the dispute may best be resolved through informal discussions, mediation or arbitration. Where mediation or arbitration is agreed on, the parties will sign a suitable mediation or arbitration agreement that is recorded by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretariat.
- 3.2 Notwithstanding the right of an aggrieved party raising a dispute to be heard, the Executive Committee may decide in accordance with the circumstances outlined in Section 4 of Schedule 1 of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-GOV-001 not to proceed with the dispute resolution process. Such a decision shall be made through voting on a Resolution in accordance with Section 8.8 of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-GOV-002 (*General Rules*) and recorded by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretariat. In such circumstances, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary shall inform the parties of the decision. The aggrieved party may submit an Appeal if it is not satisfied with this decision (see Section 5 below).
- 3.3 If the use of informal discussions, mediation or arbitration does not reach an outcome that is agreeable to the parties of the dispute, and the Executive Committee does not agree to discontinue the dispute resolution process, the dispute shall be processed in accordance with the Complaints Procedure detailed below.

4. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- 4.1 Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated considers all complaints as a possible opportunity to improve its processes and services as well as implement corrective and preventive actions. Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated is committed to monitoring and achieving continual improvement in all areas of its activities.
- 4.2 Complaint investigation shall be limited to concerns or issues within the scope of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated's activity, its members' activity, and the activity of conformity assessment bodies accredited by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated members within their scope of the accreditation and the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated scope of activity.
- 4.3 In all cases, before a complaint investigation is initiated, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary shall validate to the best of its knowledge whether the complaint is within the scope of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated activity, and all relevant information can be confirmed as sufficient to conduct an investigation through an independent source, other than the complainant. It is the responsibility of the complainant to submit information that can be validated.
- 4.4 If a complaint is found to be outside of the scope of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated, (for example, against a non-member or for unaccredited activity), the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary shall determine that the complaint is not valid and notify the complainant.
- 4.5 Within this document, references to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary are to be read as "the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary or an impartial member of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretariat designated to act on behalf of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary", and references to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Chair are to be read as "the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Chair or an impartial member of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee designated to act on behalf of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Chair where the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Chair is either not available or may have a potential conflict of interest in the matter.
- 4.6 The investigation of any complaint by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated should normally be completed within 3-6 months of receipt of a validated complaint.

4.7 Complaint Categories

Complaints are categorised as follows:

- 4.7.1 Complaints against Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated's activities.
- 4.7.2 Complaints against a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated member submitted by an individual or body that is not a member of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated.
- 4.7.3 Complaints against a conformity assessment body accredited by a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated accreditation body member, or its clients in relation to the accredited service provided.

- 4.8 Except in the case of complaints against Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated:
- 4.8.1 Complaints are to be raised initially by the complainant directly with the organisation that the complaint is against (i.e. the accreditation body member; the Regional Cooperation Body member; the Stakeholder member; or the conformity assessment body accredited by a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated accreditation body member, or its clients in relation to the accredited service provided).
 - 4.8.2 If the complainant has raised a complaint and is not satisfied that the investigating body's complaints handling procedures were followed, the complainant must follow the procedures as appropriate in Sections 4.10 or 4.11.
 - 4.8.3 The investigation undertaken by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated of any follow-up complaint shall focus on the complaint investigation process undertaken by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated member during its complaint investigation to ensure it was conducted appropriately. The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated member shall demonstrate that the underlying complaint has been investigated effectively (i.e. providing details of following the process alone is not considered sufficient). In reviewing the complaint, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated member shall make comment on the outcome of any investigation undertaken at any lower level (for example, by its customers). Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated will not re-investigate the original complaint.

4.9 Complaints against Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated's activities

- 4.9.1 A Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated member, or any other party who is dissatisfied with any activities, policies and/or procedures involving Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated, may submit a complaint to Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated by formally notifying the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary in writing.
- 4.9.2 Complaints against Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated's activities shall be handled according to the process described in Section 4.12.

4.10 Complaints against a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated member

4.10.1 Complaints against a Full or Associate member

- 4.10.1.1 Complaints against the activities, policies, and/or procedures of a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Full or Associate member must be raised directly with the member by following the member's complaints procedure.
- 4.10.1.2 If the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Full or Associate member is a member of one or more Regional Cooperation Body members of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated and the complainant is not satisfied that the Full or Associate member's complaints handling procedure was followed and would like to pursue the matter further, the complainant must submit a complaint to the relevant Regional Cooperation Body(s) by following the Regional Cooperation Body's complaints procedure.
- 4.10.1.3 If the complainant is not satisfied that the Regional Cooperation Body's complaints handling procedure was followed, the complainant may submit a complaint to Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated by following the procedure in accordance with Section 4.10.2 of this document.

4.10.1.4 If the Full or Associate member is not a member of a Regional Cooperation Body and the complainant is not satisfied that the Full or Associate member's complaints handling procedure was followed, the complainant may submit a complaint to Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated by following the procedure in accordance with Section 4.12 of this document.

4.10.2 Complaints against a Regional Cooperation Body member

4.10.2.1 Complaints against the activities, policies, and/or procedures of a Regional Cooperation Body member must be raised directly with the Regional Cooperation Body member by following the Regional Cooperation Body member's complaints procedure.

4.10.2.2 If the complainant is not satisfied that the Regional Cooperation Body member's complaints handling procedure was followed, the complainant may submit a complaint to Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated by following the procedure in accordance with Section 4.12 of this document.

4.10.3 Complaints against a Stakeholder member

4.10.3.1 Complaints against a Stakeholder member may be raised directly with Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated and shall be handled according to the process described in Section 4.12.

4.11 Complaints against a conformity assessment body accredited by a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated accreditation body member, or its clients in relation to the accredited service provided

4.11.1 Complaints against the activities, policies, and/or procedures of a conformity assessment body accredited by a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated accreditation body member, or its clients in relation to the accredited service provided must be raised directly with the conformity assessment body by following the conformity assessment body's complaints procedure, or its clients' as appropriate. If a complainant is not satisfied with the response from a client of a conformity assessment body accredited by a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated accreditation body member and would like to pursue the matter further, the complainant must submit a complaint to the conformity assessment body.

4.11.2 If the complainant is not satisfied that the conformity assessment body's complaints handling procedure was followed and would like to pursue the matter further, the complainant must submit the complaint to the relevant accreditation body member by following the accreditation body member's complaints procedure.

4.11.3 If the complainant is not satisfied that the accreditation body member's complaints handling procedure was followed and would like to pursue the matter further, the complainant has the option to submit a complaint as outlined in Section 4.10.1.

4.12 Complaint Handling Process

- 4.12.1 All complaints must be submitted in writing to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary before formal investigations can proceed. Complaints are to be emailed to secretariat@global-accreditation.nz wherever possible. However, if necessary as a result of the format of the information being provided, complaints can also be posted to:
- Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretariat
2200 Wilson Blvd #102-332
Arlington, VA 22201
United States of America
- 4.12.2 The complainant shall identify itself properly. Anonymous complaints shall not be processed.
- 4.12.3 When a complaint is received by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary shall ensure that the substance of the complaint is clearly understood and documented, that the complaint is within the scope of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated activity and that all relevant claims or statements made by the complainant or other interested parties can be properly validated in writing. Such validation is essential before the complaint can be considered as a formal complaint and any investigation initiated. If the complainant is unable to submit all necessary information within thirty (30) days of the submission of the original information to enable the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary to validate the complaint, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary shall close the complaint and inform the complainant of the closure.
- 4.12.4 The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary shall acknowledge receipt of a complaint within five (5) business days of receiving the complaint. Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated aims to advise complainants of the next steps in the complaints process within thirty (30) days of receiving a complaint.
- 4.12.5 The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary will then review the complaint and confirm the category of the complaint as per Section 4.7 of this procedure.
- 4.12.5.1 If the complaint falls under Section 4.9 of this procedure, or if the complainant has appropriately followed and exhausted the processes outlined in Sections 4.10 – 4.11, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary will review the complaint. Further information and evidence may be requested from the complainant prior to proceeding with investigating the complaint.
- 4.12.5.2 If the complaint falls under Sections 4.10 – 4.11 of this procedure, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary will, unless it is clear from the documentation submitted, confirm with the complainant that they have lodged a formal complaint with the relevant body and that the complaint has been fully investigated in accordance with the relevant body's procedure prior to contacting the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary.
- 4.12.5.3 If the processes outlined in Sections 4.10 – 4.11 have not been followed, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary will advise the complainant to follow the procedure as detailed in the relevant section of this document.

- 4.12.6 The details of the complaint, once validated and checked in accordance with Section 4.12.5, are recorded in the *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Complaints Register*. The date of the complaint is documented, and the complaint is assigned a unique number.
- 4.12.7 The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary shall obtain the complainant's written permission to approach the parties associated with the complaint as part of the investigation.
- 4.12.8 The *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Complaints Proforma* template in Annex B of this procedure is used for each complaint investigated by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated to record the details of the complaint throughout the complaints process.
- 4.12.9 For complaints related to administrative matters:
- 4.12.9.1 The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary after discussion with the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair may respond to the party concerned on behalf of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated. The *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Complaints Proforma* will be made available to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee.
- 4.12.9.2 For matters where the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary may have a potential conflict of interest in the matter, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Chair after discussion with the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair or an impartial member of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee may respond to the party concerned on behalf of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated. The *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Complaints Proforma* will be made available to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee.
- 4.12.10 For complaints not related to administrative matters:
- 4.12.10.1 The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary forwards the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated *Complaints Proforma* to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair for review.
- 4.12.10.2 The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary and Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair will determine whether the complaint is able to be addressed by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary (e.g. procedural concerns) or whether a Complaints Working Group (CWG) should be established to investigate the complaint. The purpose of the CWG is to recommend a course of action to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair for resolving the complaint. Following completion of its work, it is then disbanded.
- 4.12.10.3 If a CWG is to be established, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair appoints a minimum of two impartial members of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee and, where deemed appropriate, external experts to investigate the complaint. The team leader of this CWG must be a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee member.

- (a) The appointed members of the CWG are responsible for reviewing the *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Complaints Proforma* and all the information pertaining to the complaint. The CWG ensures that any additional information is sought from relevant sources on behalf of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated.
 - (b) The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary is responsible for tracking the progress of the CWG's review of the complaint and communicating with the CWG team leader at regular intervals. Any difficulties experienced by the CWG, which may be causing delays to the complaints handling process, shall be identified and where possible addressed, during these communications.
- 4.12.11 If the complainant does not respond to requests from the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary and/or the CWG for further information and/or evidence about the complaint, at any time during the process for a period of 2 months, then the complaint is deemed to be closed. If contact is re-established by the complainant after 2 months, a new complaint is opened.
- 4.12.12 If the investigation has not been finalised within 6 months of the initial complaint, a written progress report shall be prepared by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary or the CWG (as appropriate) and forwarded to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Chair. If a complaint investigation requires an on-site investigation, it may exceed 6 months; the progress report should include any such details.
- 4.12.13 It is expected that the complainant and, as appropriate, any involved Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated member, will assist the investigation to be completed in a timely manner. It is expected that any request for information will be met within 10 working days of the request unless otherwise agreed.
- 4.12.14 Upon completion of the complaint investigations:
- 4.12.14.1 If the complaint is addressed by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary is responsible for reporting to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair within (thirty) 30 days of completing the complaint investigations. The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary provides the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair with the completed *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Complaints Proforma* and a brief report on the findings of the investigation including any recommendations and corrective actions implemented as required for the resolution of the complaint.
 - 4.12.14.2 If the complaint is addressed by a CWG, the team leader of the CWG is responsible for reporting to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair within thirty (30) days of completing the complaint investigations. The team leader provides the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair with the completed *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Complaints Proforma* and a brief report on the findings of the investigation including any recommendations and corrective actions required for the resolution of the complaint. The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair considers the report from the CWG and decides on the necessary actions for resolving the complaint.

- 4.12.15 All parties involved in the complaint shall be promptly advised in writing of the outcome of the investigation of the complaint. For complaints addressed under Section 4.12.14.1, the written notification will be signed by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary, while for complaints addressed under Section 4.12.14.2, the written notification will be signed by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair. When advising all parties of the decision, confidentiality of the information of each of the parties involved shall be protected, unless Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated has received written permission to release such information to the other parties involved.

4.13 Reconsideration of the outcome of a complaint investigation

- 4.13.1 This review process may be undertaken when the complainant or other party affected by the outcome of the investigation, provides evidence that due process has not been followed or new information pertinent to the outcome of the complaint is provided.
- 4.13.2 The complainant may request Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated to reconsider the outcome of their complaint by submitting a formal request to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary within thirty (30) days of receipt of the notification of the outcome of the complaint investigation.
- 4.13.3 A request to reconsider the outcome of a complaint investigation shall be heard by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee and will include a review of the process followed to ensure the investigation was performed in accordance with this complaint handling procedure. Executive Committee members involved in the initial investigation shall not be involved in the reconsideration.
- 4.13.4 The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee may reopen or reconsider any aspect of the investigation or may request the CWG to reopen or reconsider any aspect of the investigation on behalf of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may also include additional independent experts on the CWG, if considered appropriate due to the specific circumstances of the request for reconsideration.
- 4.13.5 Where the CWG has been requested to reconsider the outcome of the investigation, the CWG will provide a final report to the Executive Committee for review, normally within thirty (30) days from receipt of the Executive Committee's request. The details associated with the reconsideration process will be recorded on the same *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Complaints Proforma* used for the original complaint.
- 4.13.6 The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary will convey the decision of the Executive Committee to the complainant. This decision shall be final and the complaint will be closed.

5 APPEALS PROCEDURE

- 5.1 These procedures should be read in conjunction with Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-GOV-002 (*General Rules*) Section 10.

- 5.2 In accordance with Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-GOV-002 (*General Rules*), an appeal may be lodged by a body:
- 5.2.1 having an application for membership refused; or
 - 5.2.2 on suspension or termination of membership of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated following a decision of the Members; or
- 5.3 This procedure also applies to Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated members that wish to appeal against other decisions made by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated General Assembly or Executive Committee.
- 5.4 The purpose of the procedure is to determine that the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated decision was carried out in an appropriate and competent manner, in accordance with Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated policies and procedures, considering the circumstances of each case.
- 5.5 Appeals shall only be considered if they are submitted in writing to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary within thirty (30) days of receipt of the notification of the decision against which the appeal is being lodged. Lodging the appeal by e-mail is acceptable; however, it is the responsibility of the appellant to ensure that the appeal has been successfully received by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary.
- 5.6 The appeal shall include:
- The decision by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated being appealed;
 - Details of the basis of the appellant's appeal;
 - The remedy sought and requested time frames in which actions should be done; and
 - The name and title of the executive or official who will represent the organisation and any other person(s) who will accompany the executive or official in the appeals process.
- 5.6 On receipt of an appeal, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary shall acknowledge receipt of an appeal within five (5) business days of receiving the appeal. Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated aims to advise appellants of the next steps in the process within thirty (30) days of receiving an appeal.
- 5.7 Once the appeal is received by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary, the details of the appeal are recorded in the *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Appeals Register*. The date of the appeal is documented, and the appeal is assigned a unique number. The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary then forwards the appeal details to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Chair for review.
- 5.8 Following consideration within the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee shall recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of five (5) persons to form the Appeals Board to consider the appeal.
- 5.9 The Appeals Board shall be an independent and impartial body composed of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Full members being impartial and having the qualifications and competences to decide on such matters brought to the Appeals Board. The members of the Appeals Board shall be elected by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Eligible Voting Members.
- 5.10 Members of the Appeals Board will appoint its Chair.

- 5.11 The Appeals Board shall consider and decide on appeals presented to the Board, including evaluating whether the appropriate Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated policies and procedures have been followed.
- 5.12 The Chair of the Appeals Board will report to the General Assembly on the activities and decisions of the Appeals Board.

6 RECORDS

- 6.1 The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary shall maintain records relating to disputes, complaints and appeals for a minimum of 5 years.

6.1.1 Disputes

- 6.1.1.1 Records of disputes shall be maintained as for complaints using the same register and proforma. See Section 6.1.2 below.

6.1.2 Complaints

- 6.1.2.1 The details of each complaint investigated by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated are recorded using the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated *Complaints Proforma*.
- 6.1.2.2 The *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Complaints Proforma* and the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated *Complaints Register* are updated throughout the complaint process.
- 6.1.2.3 As a minimum, the following records shall be kept by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary:
- Details of the complaint;
 - Members of the CWG (if required);
 - Copy of complaint and supporting documents, as well as any additional information provided by any party during the investigation;
 - Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Complaints Proforma;
 - Decision by Executive Committee;
 - Details of actions taken;
 - The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated response provided to the complainant;
 - Date of resolution and any other relevant correspondence or documents, as required.

6.1.3 Appeals

- 6.1.3.1 The *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Appeals Register* is updated throughout the appeals process.
- 6.1.3.2 As a minimum, the following records shall be kept by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary:
- Details of the appeal;
 - Date when the appeal was received by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated and when acknowledged;

- Name and organisation of the individuals involved in the appeal;
- Members of the Appeal Board;
- Copy of appeal and supporting documents, as well as any additional information provided by any party during the investigation;
- Copy of Appeal Board decision and summary of the action(s) taken;
- Date when the appeal was resolved.

6.2 At each Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee meeting, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary shall provide a summary of all disputes, complaints and appeals closed since the previous meeting and updates on any ongoing investigations. Any identified trends in complaints should also be reported.

6.3 At each Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated General Assembly meeting, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary shall provide Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated members with a summary of disputes, complaints and appeals received since the previous meeting, including the following information:

- The number of each type received;
- The category of complaints, as defined in Section 4.7 of this procedure;
- The nature of the complaints (i.e. administrative, procedural, technical);
- Whether any of the complaints are being addressed directly by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated;
- Any identified trends; and
- The number of disputes, complaints and appeals closed.

7 AMENDMENT TABLE

Section	Previous Version	Summary Of Changes
All	-	Initial issue of document

ANNEX A – SUMMARY OF DISPUTE AND COMPLAINT HANDLING (INFORMATIVE)

Serial	Type of Grievance	Clause Number in Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-MS-004	Process:	Decision by:	Review (if requested) of decision/outcome by:
1	Dispute between Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated, Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Members or Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Officers	3.1	Parties concerned and Executive Committee discuss whether to resolve through informal discussions, mediation or arbitration	Parties concerned and Executive Committee	-
		3.2	Executive Committee decide whether to proceed with dispute resolution	Executive Committee	Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Appeals Board
		3.3	Complaint investigation as per Serial 2 below	As per Serial 2 below for complaint investigation	As per Serial 2 below for complaint investigation.
2	Complaint against Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated's activities	4.9	For complaints related to administrative matters, investigation by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary	Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair	Executive Committee
			For complaints not related to administrative matters, as determined by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair – either the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary or a Complaints Working Group.	Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair	Executive Committee
3	Complaint against a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Full or Associate Member	4.10.1	Initial investigation by the Full or Associate Member in accordance with its own Complaints Procedures.	As per the procedures of the Full or Associate Member	As per the procedures of the Full or Associate Member

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			If complainant not satisfied that the Full or Associate Member’s complaint handling procedure was followed, complaint raised to Regional Cooperation Body for investigation	As per the procedures of the Regional Cooperation Body Member	As per the procedures of the Regional Cooperation Body Member
			If complainant not satisfied that the Regional Cooperation Body Member’s complaint handling procedure was followed, complaint raised to Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated	-	-
			For complaints related to administrative matters, investigation by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary	Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair	Executive Committee
			For complaints not related to administrative matters, as determined by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Chair – either the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary or a Complaints Working Group.	Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair	Executive Committee
4	Complaint against a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Regional Cooperation Body Member	4.10.2	Initial investigation by the Regional Cooperation Body Member in accordance with its own Complaints Procedures.	As per the procedures of the Regional Cooperation Body Member	As per the procedures of the Regional Cooperation Body Member
			If complainant not satisfied that the Regional Cooperation Body Member’s complaint handling procedure was followed, complaint raised to	-	-

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			Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated		
			For complaints related to administrative matters, investigation by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary	Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair	Executive Committee
			For complaints not related to administrative matters, as determined by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair – either the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary or a Complaints Working Group.	Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair	Executive Committee
5	Complaint against a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Stakeholder Member	4.10.3	For complaints related to administrative matters, investigation by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary	Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair	Executive Committee
			For complaints not related to administrative matters, as determined by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair – either the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary or a Complaints Working Group.	Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair	Executive Committee
6	Complaints against a conformity assessment body accredited by a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated accreditation body member	4.11	Initial investigation by the conformity assessment body in accordance with its own Complaints Procedures.	As per the procedures of the conformity assessment body	As per the procedures of the conformity assessment body

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			If complainant not satisfied that the conformity assessment body's complaint handling procedure was followed, complaint raised to the accreditation body member for investigation	As per the procedures of the accreditation body member	As per the procedures of the accreditation body member
			If complainant not satisfied that the accreditation body member's complaint handling procedure was followed, complaint raised to Regional Cooperation Body for investigation	As per the procedures of the Regional Cooperation Body Member	As per the procedures of the Regional Cooperation Body Member
			If complainant not satisfied that the Regional Cooperation Body Member's complaint handling procedure was followed, complaint raised to Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated	-	-
			For complaints related to administrative matters, investigation by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary	Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair	Executive Committee
			For complaints not related to administrative matters, as determined by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair – either the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary or a Complaints Working Group.	Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair	Executive Committee
7	Complaints against a client of a conformity assessment body	4.11	Initial investigation by the client of the conformity assessment	As per the procedures of the	As per the procedures of the client of the

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<p>accredited by a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated accreditation body member, in relation to the accredited service provided by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Full or Associate member</p>	<p>body in accordance with its own Complaints Procedures.</p>	<p>client of the conformity assessment body</p>	<p>conformity assessment body</p>
	<p>If complainant not satisfied that complaint handling procedure of the client of the conformity assessment body was followed, complaint raised to the conformity assessment body for investigation</p>	<p>As per the procedures of the conformity assessment body</p>	<p>As per the procedures of the conformity assessment body</p>
	<p>If complainant not satisfied that the conformity assessment body's complaint handling procedure was followed, complaint raised to the Full or Associate Member for investigation</p>	<p>As per the procedures of the accreditation body member</p>	<p>As per the procedures of the accreditation body member r</p>
	<p>If complainant not satisfied that the accreditation body member's complaint handling procedure was followed, complaint raised to Regional Cooperation Body for investigation</p>	<p>As per the procedures of the Regional Cooperation Body Member</p>	<p>As per the procedures of the Regional Cooperation Body Member</p>
	<p>If complainant not satisfied that the Regional Cooperation Body Member's complaint handling procedure was followed, complaint raised to Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>-</p>
	<p>For complaints related to administrative matters, investigation by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary</p>	<p>Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair</p>	<p>Executive Committee</p>

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			For complaints not related to administrative matters, as determined by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair – either the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretary or a Complaints Working Group.	Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Vice-Chair	Executive Committee
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ANNEX B: GLOBAL ACCREDITATION COOPERATION INCORPORATED COMPLAINTS PROFORMA

Details from Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Complaints Register:

COMPLAINT LOG NUMBER (Month/Year/#)	DATE COMPLAINT RECEIVED	DATE INVESTIGATION COMPLETED

Complaint investigated by: Secretary / Vice-Chair / Complaints Working Group (CWG)

Details of CWG:

DATE CWG ESTABLISHED	MEMBERS OF CWG	DATE CWG DISBANDED

Details of supporting documentation received, if any:

DATE RECEIVED	NAME OF DOCUMENT AND DETAILS
	Insert hyperlink(s) here

Details of the complaint:

DATE (YYYY-MM-DD)	DETAILS OF COMPLAINT / RECOMMENDATIONS / DECISIONS / ACTIONS / GLOBAL ACCREDITATION COOPERATION INCORPORATED RESPONSE / RESOLUTIONS / COMMENTS / DETAILS OF A RECONSIDERATION OF THE OUTCOME OF A COMPLAINT
	<p>Complainant:</p> <p>Name of Organisation Representative:</p> <p>Complaint Category: (See Section 4.7)</p> <p>Details of complaint:</p> <p>Action required:</p> <p>Updates on action taken:</p>

Details of the reconsideration of the outcome of a complaint, if any:

DATE (YYYY-MM-DD)	DETAILS OF A RECONSIDERATION OF THE OUTCOME OF A COMPLAINT