



Procedure for Complaints, Appeals and Disputes
NABET:PR: 01
(Public)

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1. **Objective**

- 1.1. This document outlines the procedure for managing complaints, appeals, and disputes regarding NABET or NABET Applicant/Accredited organizations, as well as any other relevant organizations, whether received directly or indirectly by NABET. The goal is to maximize the benefits from such complaints and appeals by initiating an enquiry or taking appropriate corrective actions and quality improvements whenever necessary.

2. **Scope**

- 2.1. This procedure applies to all complaints, disputes, and appeals, regardless of their source, made about NABET, its representation, or NABET Applicant/Accredited Organization, including, but not limited to:
- a) Internal Customers
 - b) Customers of the Applicant/Accredited Organization
 - c) Any individual or entity that has a complaint regarding NABET
 - d) Any applicant or accredited organization who complains about the conduct of NABET employees, including assessors, etc.
 - e) Any other interested party.

3. **Responsibility**

- 3.1. The CEO or Director of each division, as authorized by the CEO, is responsible for managing complaints, appeals, and disputes related to NABET, NABET-accredited organizations, and their customers.
- 3.2. For complaints/appeals/disputes relating to CEO, Secretary General QCI/ NABET Board will be responsible for processing and resolving these.

4. **Definition**

- 4.1. AC - Accreditation Committee- NABET formed this committee to decide on Accreditation and provide feedback/suggestions on the accreditation process.
- 4.2. Appeal – A request from an applicant or accredited organization for a reconsideration of any adverse decision made by NABET regarding its desired accreditation status.
- 4.3. CEO-Chief Executive Officer of NABET
- 4.4. Complaint - A statement of dissatisfaction, other than an appeal, by any individual or organization to NABET, concerning the activities and/or staff of NABET or an accredited/applicant organization, where a response is anticipated.
- 4.5. Dispute - A disagreement that arises from a complaint submitted to a provider.

NOTE: Some organizations permit their customers to communicate dissatisfaction to a provider initially. In this scenario, the expression of dissatisfaction becomes a complaint when submitted to the organization for a response, and it evolves into a dispute if the organization does not resolve it without provider intervention. Many organizations prefer that their customers first communicate any dissatisfaction to them before seeking dispute resolution outside the organization. (Refer to ISO 10003:2007)

4.6. NABET- National Accreditation Board for Education and Training

4.7. NABET applicant/accredited organizations: An organization or organization eligible for accreditation.

5. References

5.1. ISO 10002:2018- Quality Management- Customer Satisfaction- Guidelines for Complaint Handling in Organizations.

5.2. ISO/IEC 17011:2017- with option A

6. Complaints

6.1. Complaints can be made by any person or organization against the following:

- a) NABET, its staff, operations, and procedures.
- b) The assessors, experts, and committee members of NABET.
- c) The assessment process carried out by the assessors and/or NABET
- d) Quality of assessments/ evaluations
- e) Applicant/Accredited organizations
- f) Misuse their accreditation status, either in terms of scope or use of the Accreditation organization logo or Symbol.

6.2. The complaint shall be made in writing (by any means such as letter/ email etc.) to the CEO / Senior Director/ Director/ Division head with complete details of the complainant (name, address, organization etc.) and description of the complaint with supporting information / documents as relevant and necessary.

6.3. The complaint details are reviewed for completeness, and NABET will acknowledge the complaint within 14 days (excluding postal time), providing brief details on the approach to address the complaint. If additional information is needed, the complainant will be asked for it. If the complaint does not fall under NABET's domain, the complainant will be informed and offered possible assistance, such as referring the complaint to the appropriate organization or organization.

6.4. NABET will make all efforts to process / resolve the complaint within 1 month, unless it requires more time depending on the nature of the complaint. NABET will provide periodic updates on the progress of complaint investigation as well as information about its outcome to the complainant.

6.5. If the complaint lacks details about the complainant or is insufficiently described, NABET reserves the right to address the complaint as it sees fit.

6.6. If the complaint pertains to other accreditations but is related to a NABET-accredited

organization, the relevant organization is informed, and efforts are made to obtain information from that organization. Based on any inputs received, the complainant is advised to follow up with the accreditation organization.

- 6.7. The complainant is consistently updated on the status of the complaint, including its resolution.
- 6.8. If the complaint involves an accredited organization, it will be directed to that organization for possible resolution. If the complainant is not satisfied with the organization's response, the complaint will be escalated further.
- 6.9. If a complaint is received from another organization or stakeholder instead of directly from the individual involved, the organization will be informed of the outcome at the end of the complaint redressal process.
- 6.10. The Senior Director/ Director/ Division head of each division/verticle of NABET is responsible for addressing complaints at all levels. If a complaint involves the Senior Director/ Director/ Division head, then it will be handled by the CEO and Chairman of NABET. The decision communicated to the complainant shall be made by, or reviewed and approved by, individuals not involved in the complaint.
- 6.11. NABET will ensure that the investigating and decision on complaints will not lead to any discriminatory actions against the complainant.
- 6.12. The Senior Director or Director of each division will ensure that every complaint is followed through to a conclusion and will initiate any necessary corrective actions.
- 6.13. Each division of NABET shall maintain the information/records relating to complaints.

7. Appeals

- 7.1. Anyone can appeal NABET's decision to the CEO under the following circumstances:
 - a) Declining to accept an application.
 - b) Refusal to proceed with assessment
 - c) Requests for corrective action.
 - d) Changes to the scope of accreditation.
 - e) Decisions regarding the denial, suspension, or withdrawal of accreditation.
 - f) Any other actions that hinder achieving accreditation.
- 7.2. The appeal must be submitted in writing within fifteen days of NABET's decision, accompanied by all necessary supporting documents.
- 7.3. The designated individual appointed by the Senior Director/ Director/ Division head of each division verifies the documents for completeness and may request additional

supporting documentation if needed. Once the documents are complete, the receipt of the appeal is acknowledged and forwarded to the CEO of NABET. The CEO has the authority to either disallow the appeal or to form an Appeal Committee based on the merits of the appeal's content.

- 7.4. The appeal committee is formed as and when the need arises as per this procedure, based on the consideration of the facts of the case.
- 7.5. The Appeal Committee is led by nominated person by the CEO. The appointed head of the Appeals Committee may select two members from the assessors, staff, or NABET experts and may also invite additional outside members as needed to address the appeal. It will be ensured that the members have not previously been involved in the subject matter of the appeal.
- 7.6. The appeal Committee may request the appellant to present the facts in person to the appeals committee if necessary or if the appellant desires to do so.
- 7.7. The appeals committee may request information from any staff members, committee members, and empanelled assessors to assist in addressing the appeal based on facts.
- 7.8. Where available assessment reports or data are insufficient to make a decision, the Appeals Committee may recommend an onsite verification, which will be organized by the NABET Secretariat. It must be ensured that the same assessors who previously assessed the organization, or any individual involved in the adverse decision or as part of the appeal committee, shall not be included in the assessment team. The appellant will cover the costs of the onsite visit, irrespective of the outcome of the appeal.
- 7.9. The appeal committee provides its recommendation for necessary actions to address the appeal to the satisfaction of the appellant, as well as any corrective actions that need to be taken to prevent such occurrences. The CEO will make the decision on the appeal based on the recommendation from the appeal committee. The decision of the NABET CEO in this matter will be taken as final and will be communicated to the applicant or accredited organization.
- 7.10. NABET will be responsible for all decisions at every level of the handling process for appeals.
- 7.11. NABET will ensure that the investigation and decision on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions.
- 7.12. NABET shall consistently take follow-up actions and maintain records of all appeals, final decisions, and subsequent actions taken.

8. Disputes

- 8.1. The disputes regarding the accreditation system, assessment process, etc., should be submitted to (by any means such as letter/ email etc.) to the CEO / Senior Director/ Director/ Division head in writing, accompanied by information on the issue supported by documentary evidence.

- 8.2. NABET will acknowledge the dispute and may indicate the estimated time needed to resolve it.
- 8.3. The details of the dispute are forwarded to the appropriate chairman of either the Accreditation Committee or the Technical Committee for their comments and decisions. The respective committee chairman may consult with any committee members, experts, or assessors.
- 8.4. The decision regarding the dispute shall be sent to the appropriate person or organization by the Senior Director, Director, Division head of each division, or any individual designated by the CEO.

9. Financing the Complaint, Appeal and Dispute

- 9.1. There is no fee for registering a complaint and appeal . If the resolution of the complaint and appeal is achieved without any travel or additional assessment, no financing will be required for such resolutions. If the resolution necessitates travel and assessment, the costs will be borne by the defaulting party.
- 9.2. If the resolution calls for undertaking travel and assessment the fee shall be charged at the applicable assessment man-day rate per day, plus expenses.
- 9.3. Complaints by individual customers against an applicant or accreditation organization will not incur any costs for the individual customers involved in the resolution of the complaint. The costs will be covered by the defaulting entity.
- 9.4. If an applicant or accredited organization files a complaint against another accredited organization, then in case of such case , the organization that is making the Complaint, or Appeal, will be asked to give an undertaking that they will provide for the travel and assessment related cost of resolution if their complaint /appeal is dismissed. Similarly the concerned organization would be asked to give an undertaking that they will provide for the travel and assessment cost in case the decision is against them.

10. Records

- 10.1. The person designated by the Senior Director, Director, or division haed of each division would maintain a record of all complaints, disputes, and appeals received, actions taken, corrective actions if any, and their effectiveness. These records would be kept for a period of six years.