



## Procedures for Handling of Complaints & Appeals

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 <p><b>NACI</b> National Accreditation Center of Iran مرکز ملی تایید صلاحیت ایران</p>	<p><b>Procedures for Handling of Complaints &amp; Appeals</b></p>	<p>Document code: <b>NACI-P06</b> Revision No: <b>03</b> Revision date: <b>Nov.2018</b> Page 1 of 8</p>
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## Changes History

Pages/Annexes Numbers	Revision No	Revision Date	Summary of changes
Cover	02	Nov.2015	Changes in Revision NO & Date
All Pages	02	Nov.2015	Changes in clauses: 5-7,5-8,6-1-2-2,6-1-3-2,6-2-1-3,6-2-1-4,6-2-2,6-3-1,6-3-2 Clause 6-3 removed.
Cover & All Pages	03	Nov 2018	Changes in Revision NO & Date

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## 1. Objectives

The purpose of these procedures is to describe the processes for handling of complaints & appeals made to NACI, resolution of any disputes as a result, and verifying the effectiveness of any action taken to remedy the situation.

## 2. Scope

These procedures are applicable to all NACI activities in relation to applicants for accreditation.

## 3. Responsibilities

The Management Representative & the VP in charge of the department related to a particular complaint or appeal are responsible for implementing these procedures. The NACI President is responsible for supervision of the handling & effective implementation of the appropriate actions.

## 4. References & Regulations

- 4.1 ISO/IEC 17000:2004 Conformity assessment -- Vocabulary and general principles
- 4.2 ISO 9000:2015 Quality management systems -- Fundamentals and vocabulary
- 4.3 ISO/IEC 17011:2017 Conformity assessment -- requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies
- 4.4 ISO 10002:2014 Quality management -- Customer satisfaction -- Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations
- 4.5 The NACI accreditation Manual NACI-M00.

## 5. Terms & Definitions

All terms & definitions in these procedures conform to those given in the references cited in Clause 4 above. In addition, the terms & definitions given below are applicable.

- 5.1 NACI:** means the National Accreditation Center of Iran.
- 5.2 Interested Parties:** Include applicants for accreditation & the NACI accredited CABs, the users of the CAB services, the NACI Council & all individuals related to these parties.
- 5.3 Satisfaction:** The perception of a customer about the degree to which the requirements are fulfilled.
- 5.4 Complaint:** Expression of dissatisfaction other than appeal made about NACI by an interested party. The examples of a complaint include dissatisfaction of a CAB about NACI activities, as well as complaints received from the CAB users about their NACI accredited services.
- 5.5 Appeal:** Dissatisfaction expressed about a NACI decision, which may be related to the initial assessment decision, any suspension or withdrawal of accreditation.
- 5.6 Dispute:** A disagreement expressed by an interested party about the outcome of a complaint or an appeal requiring escalation of the case by third party.
- 5.7 Reviewer:** An expert nominated by the related NACI VP to review the technical details of a complaint or appeal in contact with the related interested party on the one hand, and the involved personnel on the other, in an independent & impartial manner to report the relevant expertise outcome to the Committee for handling of complaints & appeals.

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**5.8 Committee for handling of complaints & appeals (CAC):** A committee including related NACI VP, reviewer and MR is responsible for final decision about decisions based on the technical review of a complaint or appeal. The CAC members involved in complaints & appeals processes are bound by the principle of independence, impartiality, confidentiality, expertise & fair judgment.

As appropriate, an expert with VP nomination can participate in the CAC provided that she/he not involved in applicable assessment or complaints & appeals subject.

**5.9 Escalation Board:** A decision taken by the CAC in case of a dispute to declare the CAC decision as final for the interested party involved to take any legal action deemed necessary. In this condition a group including 3 members of Accreditation Council as based on NACI request will assign by the Accreditation Council President to handle the case. This is not permanent group and only held for the issues that are not solved by NACI CAC.

## 6. Procedures

### 6.1 Complaints

A complaint to NACI may be received from any of the following interested parties:

- The NACI accredited CABs or applicants for accreditation,
- Receivers of the conformity assessment services (NACI accredited CAB clients),
- Government bodies & regulatory sectors related to products & services, and
- International & regional MLA related bodies including IAF & PAC.
- Customers, , people in organization, providers(producers, distributors, retailer or vender of product or service), bankers , regulators, unions, consumers, end- users, retailer, receiver of product or service .

The NACI procedures on handling complaints & appeals are accessible to the interested parties through the NACI website([www.naci.ir](http://www.naci.ir) )& available on demand.

#### 6.1.1 Complaints handling process

A complaint may be submitted to the NACI President office by completing a Complaint & Appeal Handling form NACI-F116 by the complaining interested party. However, any complaint made on the phone or otherwise to NACI personnel shall also be documented by the responding individual on the same form & duly submitted to the President office.

#### 6.1.2 Steps in handling a complaint

6.1.2.1 The completed complaint form along with any supporting evidence received at the NACI President office.

6.1.2.2 The complaint file is considered & validated for legitimacy by the NACI VP & a competent reviewer is nominated for independent technical investigation of the issue. The reviewer shall not be involved in the complaint /appeal subject.

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6.1.2.3 The independent technical reviewer investigates the details & makes sure the interested party investigation results are available in case the complaint is related to an accredited CAB.

6.1.2.4 Upon completion of a complaint review process the reviewer shall document a report using the Review & Handling of Complaints & Appeals form NACI-F117.

### 6.1.3 Evaluation of evidence in handling a complaint

6.1.3.1 Upon initial investigation, the nominated complaint reviewer contacts the interested party concerned to obtain any additional information needed & to inform that party about an estimated response time. The reviewer also contacts any other party or personnel involved in the case in order to establish the facts of the case. Upon completion of those steps & forming an expert view on the outcome, the reviewer shall complete a form NACI-F117 to be submitted to the NACI VP.

Note: Any part of the investigation may take place at the premises of an interested party to the extent deemed necessary or advisable.

6.1.3.2 The NACI VP normally assigns a complaint case independently reviewed & duly reported on technical details to be finally decided in a CAC comprised of the Management Representative, the Department VP & any qualified experts as appropriate. The CAC decision upon consideration of the review report & all supporting evidence is submitted to the complaining interested party through the NACI. Where the complaint is not related to NACI duties, the CAC will not be held. This is based on reviewer investigations and VP approval. Investigation results will be submit to complainant by related NACI VP.

6.1.3.3 The CAC decisions are documented in a CAC Resolution form NACI-F118.

6.1.3.4 All actions related to the handling of complaints are recorded in Complaints & Appeals Status Summary form NACI-F119, and after closing of the case in Complaints & Appeals Handling Summary form NACI-F120.

### 6.1.4 Improvement of complaint handling routine

The outcome of all complaints handling is duly reported by the nominated reviewer to the Management Representative upon completion of the investigation & decision by the CAC. Those reports are used by the Management Representative to compile the needed statistics for the purpose of management review meetings, as well as issuance of any CAPA form NACI-F108 when needed to plan an action for further improvement.

## 6.2 Appeals

It is expected that any appeal on an NACI's decisions is duly received from a CAB within one month of the relevant notice or within a period of time deemed appropriate by the NACI. An appeal made by an interested party shall be accompanied by any supporting document & duly sent to NACI by registered post to be logged on the date of receipt. NACI shall inform the party on receipt of the appeal & notify any necessary information about the case. The provide information is to be made without any prejudice. The decision about an appeal is made by the CAC upon initial investigation & recommendation of a nominated reviewer. The final decision & notification of the relevant interested party is made by the NACI CAC. All CAC members are bound to demonstrate impartiality & keep confidentiality of all information by having duly signed the form NACI-F141 on impartiality & confidentiality.

### 6.2.1 NACI decisions may include:

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- 6.2.1.1 Refusal to accept an application
- 6.2.1.2 Refusal to proceed with an assessment
- 6.2.1.3 Corrective actions
- 6.2.1.4 Changes in accreditation scope
- 6.2.1.5 Decisions to deny, suspend or withdraw accreditation, and
- 6.2.1.6 Any other action that impedes the attainment of accreditation.

### **6.2.2 Appeals handling process**

- 6.2.2.1 The NACI VP submits directly the case of appeal to the CAC upon receipt in order to review the facts of the case for making required decision accordingly. The CAC shall consult with experts as necessary & conduct any required meeting in order to recommend a logical decision based on factual judgment. The CAC may also invite a representative from the appeal party for any clarification.
- 6.2.2.2 The identities of all CAC members are disclosed and the appeal party has the right to objection based on justification against any member for the NAC VP to make a decision about replacing the member if the objection is justified based on a conflict of interest.
- 6.2.2.3 The CAC shall finalize a decision within 30 days of its initial receipt in order for the appeal party to be notified by the NACI.
- 6.2.2.4 The notification of the NACI CAC decision is final & the appeal party shall be informed about any escalation procedures if that final decision is not accepted. In this condition NACI shall convene the extraordinary meeting to handle the unaccepted final decision by escalation board (Clause 5.9).

Note: All forms used for complaints investigation are also applicable as needed during the appeal handling process.

### **6.2.3 Appeal judgment process**

The CAC members involved in complaints & appeals processes are bound by the principle of independence, impartiality, confidentiality, expertise & fair judgment. The CAC decides by a final voting system to be duly disclosed to the NACI. The CAC voting results are recorded on a Minutes of Complaints & Appeals Resolution form NACI-F120. The original of this form is maintained along with a copy of the final decision notification sent to the appeal party.

### **6.2.4 Improvement of appeal handling routine**

- 6.2.4.1 Copies of all documents during an appeal process are submitted to the Management Representative for the purpose periodical management review meeting reports. Those include any outcome upon final notification & any escalation board.
- 6.2.4.2 The CAC may invite the Management Representative to the meetings as necessary.
- 6.2.4.3 The results of all complaints & appeals resolutions, as well as any management review meeting decisions on those are duly reported to the NACI Accreditation Council meeting.

## **6.3 Dispute Resolution**

- 6.3.1 The NACI VP shall take prompt action as needed in the event of an appeal rejected by the interested party which initiates a dispute case. Such dispute shall be clearly documented by the relevant interested party.

- 6.3.2 The dispute cases are urgently investigated by the NACI VP by convening any meeting deemed necessary in order to re-investigate all aspects of the case & any additional justification supplied by the interested party in dispute.
- 6.3.3 In case of any change as a result of further investigation compared to the previous decision, the NACI will notify the revised decision to the party in dispute. Any action deemed necessary by the party in dispute upon receipt of that notification shall pursue the available escalation board procedures as documented.
- 6.3.4 The NACI may discuss any of the issues at any stage of investigations with the escalation board nominated by accreditation council president for consultation & advice, but the final decision in all cases submitted is for the Escalation board to take.

## **7. Related Documents**

- 7.1 Document control procedures **NACI-P01**
- 7.2 Record control procedures **NACI-P02**
- 7.3 Procedures on Nonconformities & CAPA **NACI-P03**
- 7.4 Management review procedures **NACI-P05**
- 7.5 Procedures on accreditation of CABs **NACI-P10**
- 7.6 Guidelines on NACI Council **NACI-G01**

## **8. Forms & Records**

- 8.1 Complaints & Appeals Request form **NACI-F116**
- 8.2 Complaints & Appeals Investigation form **NACI-F117**
- 8.3 Minutes of CAC Resolutions form **NACI-F118**
- 8.4 Complaints & Appeals Summary form **NACI-F119**
- 8.5 Complaints & Appeals list form **NACI -F120**
- 8.6 CAPA form **NACI -F108**
- 8.7 Impartiality & Confidentiality form **NACI -F141**
- 8.8 All records related to these procedures are maintained on form **NACI-F105**

## **9. Recipients**

As per distribution list form **NACI -F104**

## **10. Annexes**

**None**

## **11. Withdrawn Documents**

Handling of Complaints & Appeals procedure revised in Nov.2018



**Document Control Page**

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