



Certification Pvt. Ltd.

VKU.SOP.06. Complaints, Dispute & Appeal Process

Version: 1.0

Dated: 17.12.2024



Table of Contents

1. Objective:	3
2. Scope and Applicability:	3
3. Responsibility and Authorization:	3
4. Normative references	3
5. Handling of Appeals	3
6. Handling of Complaints	4
HISTORY OF THE DOCUMENT	7

1. **Objective:** The objective of this SOP is to provide a clear understanding of the process of VKU Certification to receive, evaluate and make decisions on appeals and resolves complaints.
2. **Scope and Applicability:** This document contains the description of the process for receiving, investigating, substantiating, tracking and recording the appeals and complaints received by the organization, stakeholders, scheme owners or other entities concerning validation, verification, conformity assessment activities, or related services. It is applicable to all VKU Personnel (Internal or External) involved in VVB Activities.
3. **Responsibility and Authorization:** The Quality Manager is responsible for ensuring implementation of this SOP and maintenance of records and the top management is authorized for approval of the decision taken.
4. **Normative references**
 - ISO 14065:2020
 - ISO/IEC 17029:2019

5. Handling of Appeals

(As per ISO 14065:2020, 9.9; followed: ISO/IEC 17029:2019, 9.9.)

5.1 VKU Certification has implemented and maintains the below procedure for appeals made, by any existing or old client, against any decision.

5.2 The process for handling appeals includes the following:

a) Any client can file an appeal using the '[VKU.F37A. Complaint, dispute, Appeal](#)' and submit it to Quality Manager through email or online portal, post or any other lawful means of communication. In case the appellant has not used the appropriate form, Quality Manager sends him the correct and records the information in it before handling the appeal. On receipt of the appeal, Quality Manager acknowledges it and informs the client about the next steps. He/She ensures the validity of the appeal on the following points;

- Appellant is a genuine client
- Identity of appellant is established
- Appeal is formal and related to any of VKU Certification's opinion/decision

Quality Manager can request additional information from the appellant if required and record it in '[VKU.F37A. Complaint, dispute, Appeal](#)'.

b) The outcome of the investigation which includes any gaps, observation, non-conformity, and decision are recorded and used as appropriate for implementing the corrective action. In the event, Quality Manager is subject to the appeal, Technical Manager handles the appeal instead. The '[VKU.F37A. Complaint, dispute, Appeal](#)' is used to record appeals including actions undertaken to resolve them. The information received from appellant are made available to the panel, is

recorded and archived on the server. Quality Manager tracks the appeal process and ensures the final decision within 30 days of the receipt of the appeal.

c) After establishing the validity of the appeal, VKU Certification constitutes a panel and request impartiality committee for the approval. They put all received and relevant information through the panel to be taken into account for the investigation. The panel can also request Quality Manager for additional information, if necessary.

5.3 The quality manager /technical manager (in case of dispute with quality manager) will be responsible for gathering all necessary information to determine whether the appeal is substantiated.

5.4 On receipt of the appeal Quality Manager/technical manager (in case of dispute with quality manager) will acknowledge it and informs on the progress of investigation and provide information/notice on the final decision to appellant.

5.5 VKU Certification has made available the process for handling appeals available to all interested party through its [website \(in contact us section\)](#).

5.6 VKU Certification has appointed an independent panel to take decisions on the appeals. Further mentioned in Section 5.2 (c)

5.7 Impartiality committee ensures by taking the below measures that the submission, investigation, and decision on appeals do not result in any discriminatory action against the appellant.

- By appointing an independent panel
- Maintaining the confidentiality about the appellant and subjects to appeal
- Avoiding conflict of interest of the panel

5.8 VKU Certification's Impartiality committee ensures by endorsing the final decision in the related '[VKU.F37A. Complaint, dispute, Appeal](#)' that the decision is made by the independent appeal panel and communicated to appellant as appropriate and not by individuals who is the subject of the appeal in question.

6. Handling of Complaints

(As per ISO 14065:2020, 9.10; followed: ISO/IEC 17029:2019, 9.10.)

6.1 VKU Certification implements and maintains the below procedure for receiving, managing, evaluating, and investigating complaints, making decisions on them, and taking appropriate corrective actions. VKU Certification makes its complaints procedure publicly available through its [website \(in contact us section\)](#).

6.2 Who so ever at VKU Certification receives the complaint in any form (email, letter etc.) bring it to the notice of Quality Manager for managing it, who;

- Acknowledge the complainant about the complaint
- Send complainant to '[VKU.F37A. Complaint, dispute, Appeal](#)' for gathering the required information
- Record the complaint in the [VKU.F38A. List of complaint, dispute, appeal.docx](#)
- Gather related information and requests the additional information if necessary
- Verify all necessary information for evaluating the validity of the complaints against the criteria as set out in section 5.2 (a).
- If complaint found valid and genuine, constitute, and propose 'Complaint, Dispute and Appeal Panel' to impartiality committee for its approval.
- The panel investigates the complaint and submits its report to Quality Manager who decides the actions to be taken in response to complaint.

6.3 VKU Certification will gather all necessary information to determine whether the complaint is substantiated.

6.4 The received complaint is acknowledged within three working days by sending the acknowledgement letter through email to the complainant. All complaints are investigated within 30 days of their receiving date. The name of the persons, appointed as panel members are also informed to the complainant through email.

6.5 VKU has made available the detailed process for handling complaints to all interested parties through its [website \(in contact us section\)](#).

6.6 VKU Certification determines the authenticity of complaint by evaluating the complaint against the following criteria –

- Complainant is a genuine stakeholder
- Identity of complainant is established
- Complaint is formal
- Its related directly/indirectly to the validation and verification functions of VKU Certification

6.7 The decision of the independent panel will not result in any discriminatory actions towards the complainant.



6.8 VKU Certification ensures that resolution of complaints shall be made by, or reviewed by the following-

- The team is independent of those who are part of or carried out the validation or verification/certification activities.
- The person appointed as team member either have the same competency of the subjects to complaint or higher.
- Team members have provided their no conflict of interest and confidentiality declaration. Team Declaration for COI' in advance of taking the job as per relevant VKU Certification's procedures.
- The team is led by Technical Manager and in case he is a subject to the complaint and not independent, this role is taken by Quality Manager himself/herself. In case Quality Manager is subject of complaint it is dealt as per procedure defined in 5.2. without compromising impartiality.



HISTORY OF THE DOCUMENT

Version	Date	Amendment Summary	Prepared By	Approved By
1.0	17.12.2024	Initial Adoption	Apoorva Gupta	Dr. Vikas Kumar Aharwal