	EN ISO/IEC 17020/17024 QUALITY PROCEDURES	<i>Procedure No:</i> SOP 706
		<i>Issue No:</i> 8
	<i>Title:</i>	<i>Issued By:</i> S. O'Shea
	Customer Feedback, Complaints & Appeals	<i>Issue Date:</i> 19/10/2021

1. Purpose and scope

The objective of this procedure is to establish and maintain a method of receiving and processing client feedback and complaints. Appeals against decisions on certification is also dealt with in this SOP.

This procedure concerns all complaints, appeals and other feedback received from clients or other interested parties.

2. Procedure-Activities

- 706.01 Client feedback
- 706.02 Registration of client complaints & appeals
- 706.03 Handling of client complaints & appeals

3. Documents

3.1. System documents

- D 706.01 Client Feedback
- D 706.02 Client complaints & Appeals Log
- D 706.03 Client Complaints & Appeals Record form
- D 901 Application & Certification terms of use.

3.2. Specific documents

3.3. External documents

4. Method

706.01	Client feedback
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A. Receiving and logging client feedback


All after-sale client communication, whether written or verbal, are forwarded to the Quality Manager from the recipient. Verbal communication by phone is documented in a memo which is written during, or immediately following, the conversation with the client.

Client feedback is recorded where possible. Records for client feedback include:

- Identification of the client company and contact person (may not be applicable for feedback)
- Reference to the concerned order (may not be applicable for feedback)
- Brief description of the feedback

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The feedback is recorded by the relevant Metlab employee and forwarded to the Quality Manager for review and evaluation. The quality manager is responsible for category classification of the feedback.

706.02	Client complaint & appeal registration
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A. Receiving and logging client complaints

Client complaints and appeals are recorded via a customer complaints & appeals record form D706.03. The complaints & appeals record form is completed by the Technical / Quality manager in consultation with the person who receives the complaint.

The records for client complaints & appeals include:

- Identification of the client
- Date
- Brief description of the complaint
- Cause of the complaint
- Root cause analysis
- Findings
- Action

The involved departmental manager is informed of the complaint. The complaint is entered into the complaints log D706.01 by the Quality Manager.


B. Classification of the client feedback and complaints & appeals

Client complaints, appeals & feedback are classified according to their cause. The purpose is to allow for better tracking of trends and evaluating improvements in specific domains. Possible causes are:

- Labeling problem
- Nonconforming inspection results
- Samples damaged in delivery
- Wrong inspection results sent
- Late delivery to client
- Problems with communication and responsiveness
- Complaints regarding business practices, publicity, etc.
- Appeals against certification results.

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Client feedback is recorded on the client feedback form D706.01. Responsible functions for each type of feedback have been defined.

- General enquiries (responsibility: inspection department)
- Inspection performance (responsibility: inspection department)
- Accuracy of the inspection results (responsibility: inspection department / technical manger)
- Packaging (responsibility: inspection department)
- Distribution and delivery (responsibility: inspection department)
- Availability (responsibility: inspection department)
- Order handling and order changes (responsibility: inspection department / technical manager)
- Aftersales support and service (responsibility: technical / Quality / Inspection Department Manager, as appropriate)
- Contracts, price (responsibility: inspection department manager)

When necessary, client enquiries are re-directed to these responsible functions by the Admin Staff.

706.03	Client complaint and appeals handling
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A. Appeals against decisions on certification.

Metlab certification body is committed to a fair appeal process for all applicants, candidates and certified persons with any adverse outcome on the certification decision. The candidate shall submit the appeal to Metlab Certification body, in writing no later than 1 working week of receiving the outcome on their certification result. The date on the issued paperwork / e-mail containing the result shall be the date from which the 1 working week period commences.

Metlab will verify the candidate details, Name, date, employer, scheme, examination reference number, results and certificate if any issued (only if passed examination) prior to commencing the appeals process.


Metlab shall acknowledge the receipt of the appeal via written and verbal communication and shall keep the candidate informed on the progress throughout the appeal.

The candidate shall clearly set forth the reasons they believe the decision was improperly decided. Including documentation to support such claim.

Upon receipt of an appeal, Metlab certification body will gather all evidence relating to the case and make a decision, previous similar judgment will be taken into account during the appeals decision.

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The appeals process will be documented with the use of D706.03 *Client complaints and appeals record*. Any supporting documentation will accompany D706.03. D706.03 will outline the findings and also the corrective action required if any.

Any Member of the certification body involve in the initial certification shall not take part in the appeals decision. Metlab certification body members are experienced and fully understand the certification scheme, the quality manual used, all procedures and documentation contained within.

We aim to deal with all appeals within 30 day of written receipt depending on the volume of appeals. Metlab will give the candidate formal notice in writing of the outcome from the appeals process.

All appeals decisions will be conducted fairly, equally and in an unbiased manor regardless for the applicant. Investigation and decision on appeals will not result in any discriminatory actions, except where criminal fraud or negligence is involved.

If the appellant does not accept the outcome of its conclusions, Metlab shall refer to the Impartiality Committee.

The process flow for dealing with Appeals against decisions on certification is shown in Fig 1

B. Complaints.

Complaints will be dealt with in a similar fashion. The process is slightly different. The process flow is shown below in Fig 1.

Metlab certification body is committed to a fair complaints process for all interested parties, the complainant shall submit the complaint to Metlab Certification body in writing Metlab will verify the Complainant details, Name, date, contact information etc. and record it on D706.03 prior to commencing the complaints process.


Metlab shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint via written and verbal communication and shall keep the complainant informed on the progress throughout investigation.

The candidate shall clearly set forth the reasons for the complaint and provide supporting documentation where possible to support their complaint.

Upon receipt of a complaint, Metlab certification body will gather all evidence relating to the case and decide how to respond to the client and, when applicable, what needs to be done to correct the problem for the client. This is recorded on the client complaint and appeal record form (D706.03 *Client complaints and appeals record*.) and the client is informed of this decision.

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Any substantiated complaint about a certified person shall be referred by the certification body to the certified person in question at an appropriate time.

The decision to communicate, review, or approval of the complaint, shall be made by personnel not involved in the subject of the complaint.

All client complaints are reviewed to determine whether an audit is necessary and whether it should be discussed during a quality meeting. The outcome of the meeting will decide what corrective action to take if any. This decision is recorded on the corrective action request. D804.01, SOP 804 corrective actions.

If the complainant does not accept the outcome of its conclusions, Metlab shall refer to Impartiality Committee.



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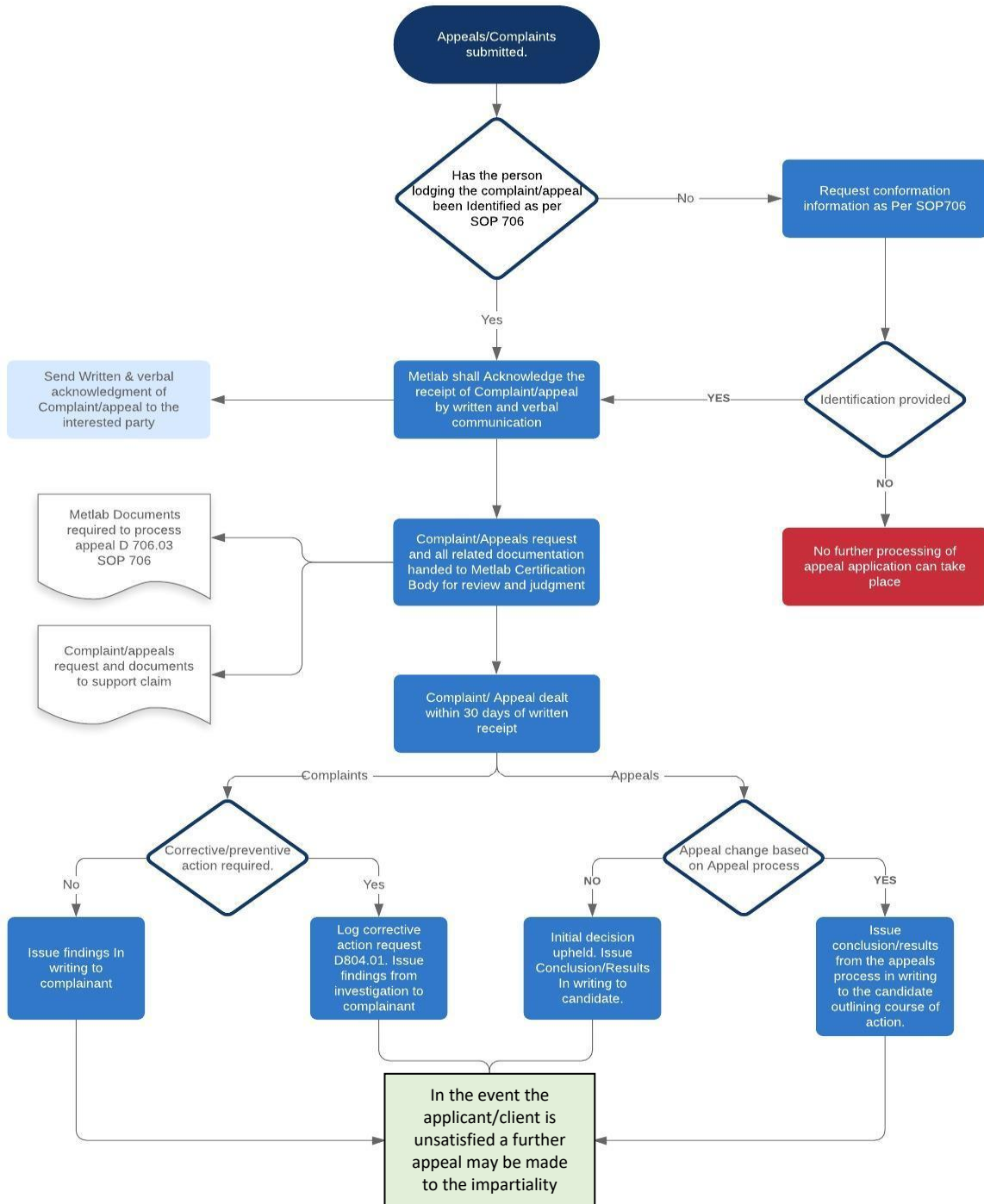
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Fig 1

Metlab Complaints/Appeals process Flow



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5. Revision history

REVISION HISTORY			
Rev	Description of Change	Author	Effective Date
0	Initial Release	JH	10/11/12
2	Updated all Docs	JH	06/03/15
3	Updates – revised wording	POM 1	23/10/15
4	Change to standardize reference to EN ISO 17020	SOS	12/04/17
5	Addition of EN ISO/IEC 17024 + flow diagram	SC	20/08/19
6	Change the logo – Added the INAB Accreditation	AI	18/06/20
7	Updates – revised wording	SOS	04/11/20
8	Updates – revised wording and changes in the footer	AI	19/10/21

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