

CARS QA Section 1

Quality System Procedures

Appeals and Complaints



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1. Introduction:

This procedure defines how appeals against any certification decision, by CARS QA clients and complaints from customers, suppliers or third parties are handled.

This procedure is available, upon request, to any member of the public reasonably requiring it.

CARS QA will preserve the confidentiality of all information received in respect of complaints and appeals.

CARS QA will consider any expression of grievance, discontent or disagreement from an applicant, certified client or related party as a complaint. Such incidents may relate to the services or products of CARS QA or one of their certified clients.

2. Complaints:

Complaints may be received from customers, suppliers or third parties about CARS QA or a CARS QA certificated client and will be recorded and tracked on form doc. 033. All complaints will be acknowledged and the complainant will receive regular progress reports including notification of the end of the complaints handling process.

All customer complaints, whether received verbally or in writing, are recorded by the member of CARS QA staff receiving the complaint. No member of staff investigating a complaint will have been previously involved in the subject of the complaint.

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The record will detail

- the member of CARS QA staff receiving the complaint
- the person making the complaint
- the date of receipt
- how the complaint was received (verbally by telephone or during a visit or in writing)
- who the complaint is aimed at (CARS QA or a CARS QA certificated client) and
- details of the complaint
- personnel responsible for investigating
- review of root cause
- systemic corrective action where required

Where the complaint is being received from a third party about a CARS QA certificated client, the person making the complaint must be informed that the problem is being recorded and will be thoroughly investigated. Third parties will not normally be informed of the outcome of an investigation as this may breach our client's confidentiality. The member of CARS QA staff reviewing the complaint will also review records and consider the effectiveness of the certified system.

Complaints about CARS QA certificated clients will be referred to the client and will usually be investigated during the next scheduled surveillance visit. Where the severity of the type, or level of complaints, indicates a breakdown in the client's quality system, then a special visit may be authorised. A copy of the certificated client's own investigation report may also be requested where required. The assessor will investigate all of the appropriate documentation records and procedures and interview appropriate staff in order to satisfy whether there is a problem with the client's quality system.

Where significant problems are found, then the assessor may recommend that the certificate be suspended or withdrawn which will be handled in accordance with CARS QA standard procedures.

Any complaint received against the service provided by CARS QA, will be investigated by the Chief Executive. If this poses a conflict of interest, then the investigation will be by the Certification Manager or other impartial representative.

The handling and resolution will be recorded along with the original record of the complaint.

If the complaint is from a client who eventually does not accept the proposed resolution, then the client will be reminded of his right of appeal.

