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## 0 INTRODUCTION

### 0.1 Scope and purpose

The aim of this procedure is to:

- ensure that appeals are considered impartially, objectively and in accordance with the applicable CPA requirements for accreditation.
- establish a definition of an appeal so that no ambiguity exists.
- ensure that appeals are logged and tracked and resolved.
- ensure post resolution an audit is conducted to assess the effectiveness of the processes and decisions taken.

### 0.2 Responsibility

The responsibility for dealing with appeals rests with the Executive Manager, the PAC, the Chief Executive, the Chairman and the CPA Board.

### 0.3 References

ISO/IEC 17011 Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies (CAB), 7.10.1 and 7.10.2 state:

7.10.1 The accreditation body shall establish procedures to address appeals by conformity assessment bodies.

7.10.2 The accreditation body shall:

- a) Appoint a person or group of persons to investigate the appeal who are competent and independent of the subject of appeal;
- b) Decide on the validity of the appeal;
- c) Advise the CAB of the final decision(s) of the accreditation body;
- d) Take follow-up action where required
- e) Keep records of all appeals, of final decisions and follow-up actions taken.

### 0.3 Definitions

ISO 17011 defines an appeal as:

*'request by a conformity assessment body for reconsideration of any adverse decision made by the accreditation body related to its desired accreditation status.'*

Note: *Adverse decisions include*

- *Refusal to accept an application*
- *Refusal to proceed with an assessment*
- *Corrective action requests*
- *Changes in accreditation scope*
- *Decisions to deny, suspend or withdraw accreditation, and*
- *Any other action that impedes the attainment of accreditation'*

Conformity Assessment Bodies (CAB) – Laboratories and EQA Scheme providers

### 0.4 Related documents

AP-LAB-AssmHndbk – The Conduct of CPA (UK) Ltd Medical Laboratory Assessments

MI-CPA-Appeals – Instruction sheet

MP-CPA-Appeals Process

AL-CPA-Appeals – Appeals log

MI-CPA-ARP Hearing

MI-CPA-ARP Feedback

## 1 APPEALS

CPA shall accept appeals from a laboratory that is the subject of an adverse accreditation decision. Appeals must be made in writing, within one month of the laboratory concerned receiving its report following an on-site assessment. Beyond that time limit appeals are only considered in very exceptional circumstances.

All decisions stand throughout the investigation of an appeal. Appeals shall be acknowledged by the Executive Manager (or nominated person) within two working days of receipt. CPA must ensure that it is the appellant's intention to embark on the Appeals Procedure. A copy of the Appeals procedure shall be issued with the acknowledgement.

At any time during the review, the appellant may withdraw the appeal in writing. However, if for any reason an appeal is withdrawn, a future appeal on the same grounds shall not be considered.

All appeals are logged (AL-CPA-Appeals). The log is updated and maintained at each stage of the appeal process by the Quality Manager. Copies of correspondence received and replies issued to the appellant shall be kept with the Quality Manager and on the individual case file.

If at any stage a reassessment of the laboratory is recommended, regardless of the outcome of any appeal, the appellant shall meet the cost of this additional visit.

CPA considers appeals **internally** (Stage 1). Any unresolved appeals are referred to an Appeal Review Panel (ARP) (Stage 2) on request by the appellant or CPA.

### 1.1 Stage 1

On receipt of an appeal the Executive Manager or nominated person shall appoint an independent Regional Assessment Manager. They shall not have been directly involved in the assessment or decision-making process for the appellant laboratory, and shall be familiar with CPA requirements and procedures.

They shall be asked to investigate the initial appeal to ascertain that CPA's policies and procedures were appropriately and competently implemented in relation to the specific accreditation decision that has been questioned, taking into account the particular circumstances of the case. Information regarding the actions, responses and behaviours of the appellant, assessors and CPA shall be considered during the investigation. CPA shall make available to the investigator all documentation relating to the original decision made.

The Chief Executive or Executive Manager shall consider the findings of the investigator and any other relevant information in deciding the outcome of the investigation. They shall inform the appellant of the outcome of the internal investigation of the appeal within 10 working days of the acknowledgement of appeal. The letter shall be issued by registered post and shall inform the appellant that if they wish to engage stage 2 of the appeals process then they must do so within 1 month, otherwise the appeal shall be considered as closed.

### 1.2 Stage 2

An Appeal Review Panel shall only be convened on request by the appellant or CPA. Any supporting documentation from the appellant must be submitted to the Chairman of the ARP at least 5 working days ahead of the hearing.

The appellant must make the request for an ARP to be convened within one month of the date of notification of the outcome of Stage 1 after which the appeal shall be considered closed.



The ARP consists of a Chairman and two members nominated by the Chairman of CPA and drawn from either:

Members of the CPA Board or  
Ex-PAC members - who are competent in the relevant discipline specific to the appeal  
and are active peer assessors for CPA.

The ARP team make up would normally be one CPA Board member and two ex-PAC members, a Consultant and a BMS. The Board member shall chair the ARP.

The appellant may object once to the membership of the ARP, after which the Chairman of CPA shall select a replacement member(s).

ARP members shall have no commercial interest in the appeal being considered and shall not have been personally involved in any matters relating to the appeal.

CPA shall make available the findings of the internal investigation to the ARP. An Appeal Review Panel Hearing may be required at this stage (see guidelines MI-CPA-ARP Hearing).

The Appeal Review Panel shall feed back to the Chairman of CPA (see guidelines MI-CPA-ARP Feedback).

The CPA Chairman shall inform the appellant of the decision following consideration of the recommendation of the Appeal Review Panel.

A copy of the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Appeal Review Panel shall be provided to the appellant.

CPA shall undertake an audit of the appeals process (*as per 0.1.4 above*).