



UK ACCREDITING SERVICES LTD (UKASL)

Guidelines for Dealing with Complaint and Appeal



UK ACCREDETING SERVICES LTD (UKASL)

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1. Definitions

- **Complaint**

Expression of dissatisfaction by any person or organization against to the activities of SASL or a CAB accredited by SASL.

- **Appeal**

It is a request by a CAB to SASL for reconsideration of any adverse decision made by SASL related to its desired accreditation status.

- **SASL Performance**

SASL is committed to provide a world class, value adding accreditation service and aim to maintain the highest standards in all SASL dealings with SASL customers, third parties and stakeholders. However, SASL recognize that on occasion it may be necessary for SASL customers, or those using accredited services to raise a complaint/appeal with SASL.

If you are a third party who has concerns about the activities of an SASL accredited CAB, or you are a direct customer of SASL who is unhappy with SASL service, then SASL want to hear about it.

2. SASL Can Help If:

- You are an SASL accredited CAB wanting to make a complaint/appeal or raise a concern.
- You have raised a complaint/appeal with an SASL accredited CAB but believe they have not addressed your concerns in line with accreditation requirements.
- You have justifiable concerns a complaint/appeal against accredited CAB by SASL.
- You have noted a misuse of the national accreditation symbol.

3. SASL Can't Help If:

- The body/organization you wish to complain/appeal about is not SASL accredited or certificated by an SASL accredited certification body.
- Your complaint/appeal is anonymous, verbal or not supported by clear evidence which would warrant /justify an investigation by SASL.
- Your issue surrounds specific financial or legal issues contractual disagreement with an SASL accredited CAB or an organization which has been certificated by an SASL accredited certification body.

4. What to do if you have a complaint/appeal?

SASL is committed to providing a world class, value adding accreditation service in accordance with International Standards. SASL aims to deal with any complaints/appeal SASL receives in a fair confidential and impartial manner.

5. SASL role and remit when dealing with complaints/appeals

SASL will investigate complaints/appeals in accordance with the requirements placed upon us by the international standard “*Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies*”. SASL is not a regulator and as a consequence SASL doesn't have any legal powers. In addition, SASL is not an arbitration service



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and therefore, cannot mediate between an accredited CAB and its customers concerning any specific contractual or financial disagreements or legal issues. Anonymous, verbal or unsubstantiated complaints will not normally be logged and investigated by SASL unless there is clear evidence available to justify an investigation.

6. Confidentiality

SASL is required by the international standard to have arrangements in place with all SASL customers to safeguard the confidentiality of information obtained via the process of accreditation. Therefore, SASL is not permitted to disclose confidential information about its customers outside of the organization without the written consent of the customer. The only exception is where the law requires such information to be disclosed without such consent

7. How will SASL deal with your complaint/appeal?

Once SASL receive your complaint/appeal in writing SASL will review all the evidence you have provided. This process may require the submission of additional information or further clarification of the issues prior to the complaint/appeal being formally logged. If SASL determine during the review process that the matter being complained/appealed about is not within SASL remit, SASL will advise you as to why your complaint/appeal will not be pursued. On completion of SASL review, SASL will register your complaint/appeal, allocate a unique reference number and an investigating officer/Committee will be appointed. A formal acknowledgement confirming receipt of the complaint/appeal, detailing the SASL remit for the investigation, will be sent on completion of the logging process. This normally takes place within 10 working days of receipt, unless further information or clarification is required. SASL will provide details of the likely timescales for the investigation to be completed. It should be noted that timescales may vary dependent on the severity and extent of the issues within the complaint/appeal. On completion of SASL investigation, SASL will inform you of the outcome and whether your complaint/appeal has or has not been upheld. Please note for complaints/appeals received from third parties about SASL accredited CABs, SASL is limited as to the level of information ,SASL may provide in relation to SASL investigation and the complaint/appeal outcome for reasons of confidentiality.

- All persons involved shall take necessary measures to preserve the confidentiality of information obtained during the investigation of the complaint.
- A complainant may request to remain anonymous to other parties involved in providing information for the investigation and the designated investigator shall take adequate steps to preserve confidentiality.
- Any individuals named as investigators that have a real or perceived conflict of interest or confidentiality issue with the information included within the complaint shall excuse themselves immediately from any discussions or potential receipt of information regarding the specific complaint.

8. Timing of Complaints Process

- If the complainant is unable to submit all necessary information within 30 days of the submission of the original information to enable SASL to authenticate the complaint, SASL shall close the complaint and inform the complainant of the closure.



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9. Conditions for Acceptance of a Complaint/Appeal

SASL's policy is to accept complaints/appeals which are relevant to SASL, or to the related accredited activities of an SASL accredited CAB; if authenticated, received by e-mail, filed in person, or by phone. Authentication would normally involve the receipt of a complain request record and/or other documentary evidence. This formal procedure shall be followed when a complaint/appeal is received.

10. Types of Complaints/Appeals

Complaints/appeals received by SASL are categorized into two types:

- **TYPE A**

Concerning the activities of SASL, e.g. Complaints/appeals about conduct of assessments, conduct of SASL staff.

- **TYPE B**

Is directed to SASL concerning the accreditation activities of SASL - accredited bodies.

11. Handling the Complaint

After a complaint is received in SASL, SASL quality manager will register it and then SASL designate the relevant manager/committee concerned with the complaint. SASL quality manager will send a copy of the complaint to the relevant manager/committee for investigation.

- **For complaints of type A**

The relevant manager will investigate the complaint and then prepare a written report on complain to describe whether SASL procedures and policies have been met or not. Where grounds have been found for SASL to reconsider its treatment of the complainant, the report will append specific recommendations on the actions to be taken.

- **For complaints of type B**

SASL shall formally designate a committee to deal with the complaint, the committee formally request the accredited CAB to respond to SASL, giving initial comment on complain and indicating the actions it propose to be taken to investigate.

On receipt of the report, SASL may if necessary modify the appended recommendations (but not the factual report). SASL will formally notify the complainant as soon as possible with the outcome of SASL investigations and proposed SASL actions.

SASL shall keep all papers of the complaint (the original complaint, the report of complaint investigation, the formal report and other correspondences) in a file named "COMPLAINTS".

12. Handling with Appeals

- **Conditions for acceptance of an appeal**

Appeals will be considered only against an accreditation decision made by SASL relating to the granting, maintaining, extending, reducing, suspending or terminating of accreditation.

This process should not be followed for appeals received without documented authentication.



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All appeals concerning the accreditation decisions of SASL shall be directed to SASL and not to any committees, groups or committees associated with SASL. Appeals shall not be handled by any group or committee except as indicated in this procedure.

13. Timescales

SASL quality manager shall inform all appellants in writing, within 10 working days of receipt of an authenticated appeal of the action that SASL plans to be taken.

Where the appellant does not accept the results of the internal review by SASL and when SASL has no justifiable reason to reject the appeal then, the appeal shall be considered by an appeals committee within 30 days of receipt of the authenticated appeal, The appellant shall be given at least 7 working days' notice of the time and place of the meeting of the appeals committee.

If an appellant fails to provide the information required by SASL and any other attachments to authenticate the appeal within a period of 21 days from receipt of the appeal request from SASL the appeal shall be automatically rendered invalid.

The independent appeal committee has all rights to investigate or asking for any documents related to the appeal, also it investigates the situations with the appellant and with the relevant managers.

After all needed clarification for appeal has been done; appeal committee takes its independent decision for the appeal.

Appeal committee decision is a final decision and no resuming can be done on it.

SASL has to notify the appellant with the appeal committee decision outcomes after its declaration and resuming the process after that according to the appeal committee decision.