


Standard Operating Procedure

 LABORATORY ACCREDITATION BUREAU	Subject: Appeals, Complaints and Disputes	SOP 203
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POLICY / POLICY REFERENCE

ISO/IEC 17011
L-A-B Quality System Manual

PURPOSE and SCOPE

To describe process for handling client appeals, complaints and disputes

RESPONSIBILITY

The President/COO is responsible for this procedure

ACTION/METHOD TO ACHIEVE THE SYSTEM ELEMENT REQUIREMENT

APPEALS PROCEDURE


Written appeals about any aspect of the accreditation process must be submitted to L-A-B within 30 days of the incident. The appeal must clearly state why the laboratory does not agree with the decision and provide any data and other appropriate documentation to support its view. L-A-B Appeal Form 203.1 shall be completed by the appealing laboratory.

An Appeals Committee will be appointed per L-A-B Quality System Manual. The Appeals Committee will include the Executive TAG members and may be expanded, as necessary. When adequate information is provided, every attempt will be made to resolve the appeal within 30 days of receipt.

The Appeals Committee may conduct the review via phone conference or electronically. The Appeals Committee members may chose a formal face-to-face meeting at a venue of their choice.

Decisions of the Appeals Committee are final. Form 203 will be used to document the opinions of the Appeals Committee. Further arbitration will be handled through a professional organization at the appellant's expense.

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DISPUTE PROCEDURE

Disputes concerning such items as interpretation of requirements should be handled either during the assessment between the L-A-B Assessor, Client representative and appropriate L-A-B staff or during the review of findings by L-A-B staff when reviewing and approving the assessor report of the assessment.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

When L-A-B receives complaints from all sources, including but not limited to laboratories, other accreditation bodies, specifiers, etc:

- If the complaint is not already received on the Form 203.2 request the complainant to capture the complaint on the form
- L-A-B may complete the Form 203.2 for the complainant with all of the appropriate information and submit with the complainant's approval.
- Decide on the validity of the complaint.
- In the case of the laboratory complaining about another laboratory we will ask where appropriate the complaining lab to seek remedy with the laboratory they are concerned with.
- L-A-B will take appropriate action and assess effectiveness through the CAR/PAR system if necessary.
- If complaint is valid, L-A-B will record the complaint and actions taken in the L-A-B Database.
- L-A-B will respond to the complainant.
- Complaints that cannot be resolved in the course of staff's normal routine are forwarded to the President/COO. The President/COO establishes the course of action required to resolve the complaint.

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DOCUMENTATION/REFERENCES

L-A-B Quality System Manual
L-A-B SOP 104 – Procedure for Corrective Action
L-A-B Form 203.1 – Appeal Form
L-A-B Form 203.2 – Complaint Form

RECORDS

Dispute and Appeals Review Committee Reports
L-A-B CAR/PAR database

REVISION HISTORY

Revision Level	Revision Date	Revised By	Brief Description of Revision
Original Issue	3/22/00	Brenda Dusek	Original Issue
Rev. 1	5/30/01	Lynne Neumann	Expanded appeals procedure to give more detail of action.
Rev 2	05/22/03	Lynne Neumann	Better defined "Dispute" process resolution
Rev 3	11/05/03	Lynne Neumann	Revised the responsibility for complaints.
Rev 4	05-31-05	Ryan Fischer	Revised to reference Form 203 (Appeals Committee Ruling)
Rev. 5	10-20-05	Linda Mumma	Revised to current practice and ISO/IEC 17011
Rev. 6	05-30-06	Ryan Fischer	Further defined the types of complaints.
Rev 7	06/11/08	Linda Mumma	Updated to reflect current Operations staff titles
Rev 8	05/05/10	Doug Leonard	Updated with Form 203.1 and Form 203.2

Approved: 

DATE : 05/05/10