



OPERATION CONTROL PROCEDURE

DOCUMENT TITLE	Appeals and Complaints Handling		
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REVISION HISTORY

Rev. No.	Date	Nature of Revision / Change
00	10.04.2016	New Issue
01	16-05-2019	Added 7.2.8

1.0 OBJECTIVE

The objective of this procedure is to ensure that:

- Complaints and appeals are properly recorded, investigated and decisions/actions initiated to correct the deficiency.
- Methods including responsibilities are clearly assigned and the complainant/appellant is informed on the action taken.

2.0 SCOPE

This procedure shall be applicable to the Certification services offered by ASTRON. This procedure is applicable to appeals / complaints received from ASTRON clients and all interested parties.

3.0 DEFINITIONS / ABBREVIATIONS

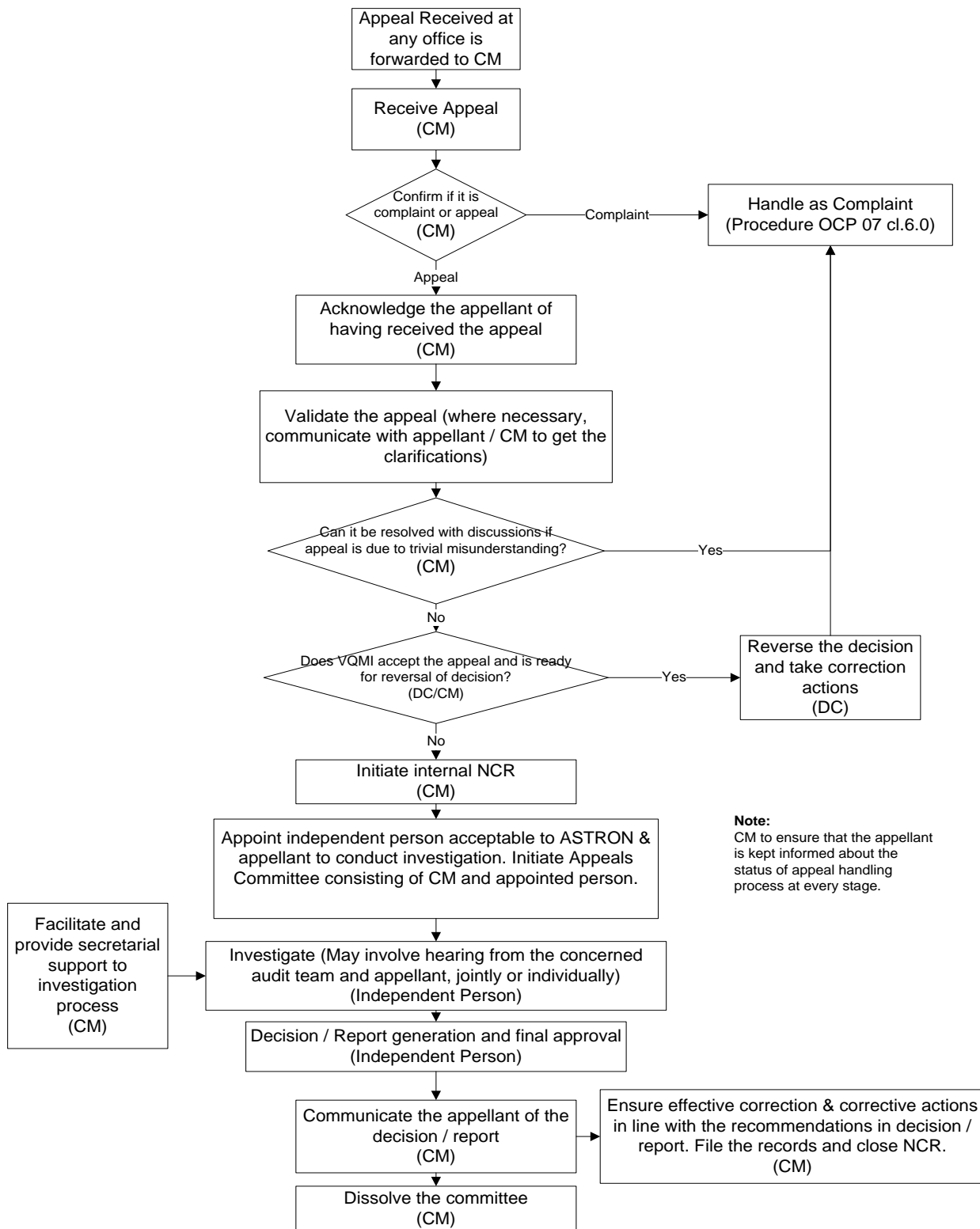
CM	Certification Manager
DC	Director Certification
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
ASTRON	ASTRON Certification LLC

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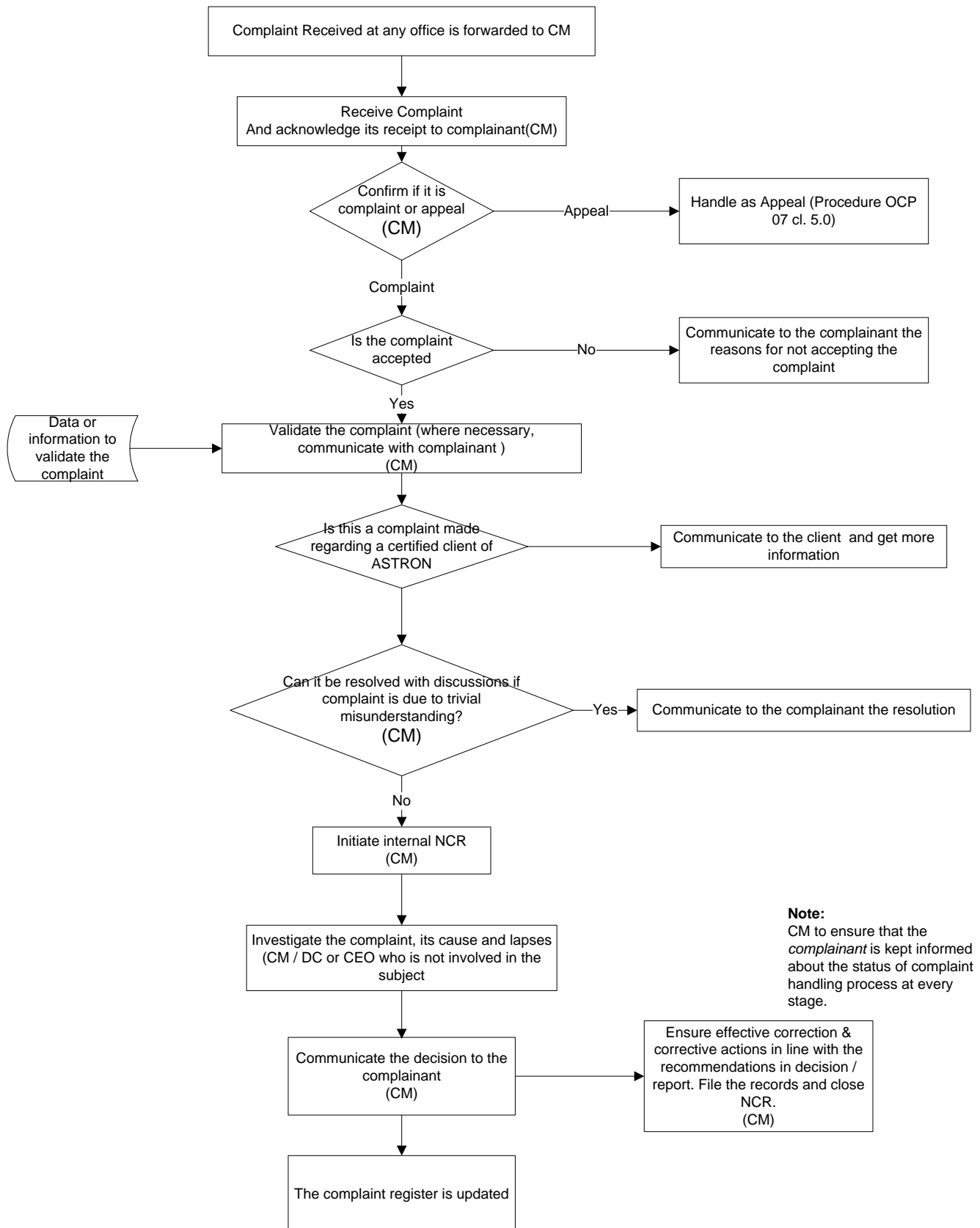
- 4.0 RESPONSIBILITY:** All relevant functions mentioned in this procedure
- Sending Complaints / Appeals: ASTRON Client, Client's client, other interested party / person
 - Receiving the complaint / appeal: CM
 - Classification (appeal or complaint): CM
 - Validation and investigation of complaint: CM
 - Communication with complainant: CM
 - Validation of Appeal: CM
 - Appoint independent personnel and initiate appeals committee: CM
 - Administrative coordination and conduct of investigation of appeal: CM
 - Decision on appeal: By independent appointed personnel
 - Communication with appellant: CM

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5.0 Appeals received by ASTRON will be handled as follows:



6.0 Complaints Handling adheres to the following steps



7.0 Terms of Reference for Appeals Committee:

7.1 Rules for appointment for Appeals Committee:

7.1.1 The members of an Appeal Committee can be the same as the Certification Decision Committee or other independent and impartial members assigned to this committee. In the event that a member or members of the Appeal committee do have a conflict of interest, based upon the facts or circumstances of a specific appeal, including employment or other affiliations of the appellant, then ASTRON management in conjunction with the acting Chair of the Appeal Board shall select a substitute member or members to hear and decide upon that claim.

7.1.2 The Appeals committee will not have any person as its member against whose decision the appeal has been raised.

7.1.3 Competence criteria: Knowledge and Experience for the members of Appeals committee:

- LA for one or all schemes of certification offered by ASTRON.
- Formal qualification in the field of science/engineering to a minimum level of university graduate.
- The composition of the committee should have at least one member with at least 3 years of full-time experience of decision making in any stream of services governed by Conformity Assessment standard.
- At least 15 years of experience in industry / academics
- Experience of working with ASTRON Group at a managerial level for at least 2 years

7.1.4 Skills:

- Auditing and leading audit teams
- Objective decision making

7.2 WORKING PRINCIPLES:

7.2.1 Language of working: English

7.2.2 Confidentiality: All information and documents gathered during involvement in the committee is understood as confidential. Members sign a confidentiality agreement and acknowledge that ASTRON is the rightful owner of all confidential information and undertake all necessary and suitable measures to maintain the level of confidentiality. The Board decides on necessary actions in the event of breaches of confidentiality.

7.2.3 Meetings: The committee meets as required based on the nature of appeal received. There are no regular meetings of the committee as it is constituted only for an appeal received.

7.2.4 Remuneration: Members are not provided reimbursement for their time.

7.2.5 Agenda and Correspondence: The sole agenda for the committee is to resolve the appeal made by the client and will be done based on the documents given to them for particular clients. The documents of the client and statements of the auditors concerned will be recorded for the decisions of the committee. The committee can

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take all the background information of the client as collected by ASTRON or by itself in resolving the appeal.

7.2.6 Decision-making process: The committee seeks to achieve decisions by consensus. If the CDC feels that consensus is not achievable, it may seek more information from the concerned LA. The decision is postponed till such sought information is made available. Based on its finding the committee may give any of the following decisions:

- Re-classification of findings during any audit. Any background information supporting the intent of a particular classification.
- Revoking a finding if the committee reaches a conclusion that the finding is unjustified.
- Any other decision related to the audit in question, auditor in question or client in question.

7.2.7 Communication to the client and resolution: The decision committee communicates the outcome of the appeals process to the client. If the client has any disagreement on the decision, the management of Astron in consultation with the Decision committee resolves the differences with the client

7.2.8 Submission, investigation and decision on complaints and appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the complainant / appellant.

7.2.9 Records:

The record of the decisions of the committee are maintained by ASTRON as its property.

8.0 Notes:

- Investigation on a complaint shall not be delayed for more than 3 weeks from the date of receipt of the complaint.
- All verbal complaints received by ASTRON shall be recorded in the complaint register (ASTRON-F-44) and treated according to the procedure given above.
- The complaint register shall be updated with necessary details regarding the actions taken on the appeal / complaints.
- ASTRON will seek the opinion of the client whose complaint it is dealing, on the extent of publicity given to a particular complaint, however, it will also be governed by any statutory/ regulatory requirements in this case. The decision will be taken by the HOO.
- The independent person appointed to investigate the appeal should:
 - Be competent in the scheme and sector code for the certification decision against which appeal has been raised,
 - Be independent of the certification process against which appeal has been raised,
 - Sign confidentiality and conflict of interest agreement.

9.0 RECORDS

9.1 Complaint – Appeals register (L3 ASTRON F 44).

10.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTATION

10.1 L1 ASTRON QM

10.2 ISO-IEC 17021-1:2015

10.3 ASTRON- Rules of certification (L3 ASTRON F 04)