

NABL 132



**National Accreditation Board for Testing
and Calibration Laboratories (NABL)**



Procedure for Dealing with Complaints

ISSUE NO. : 07
ISSUE DATE : 19-Feb-2018

AMENDMENT NO. : 02
AMENDMENT DATE : 15-Jul-2019

AMENDMENT SHEET

SI	Page No.	Clause No.	Date of Amendment	Amendment	Reasons	Signature QM	Signature CEO
1	3/8	1	30.05.2019	Defining complaints & Feedbacks as highlighted	Internal review	-Sd-	-Sd-
2	3/8	3.5		Inclusion of Assessor monitoring cell for dealing negative feedbacks as highlighted			
3	5/8	5 (c)		Inclusion as negative feedbacks against assessors etc.			
4	5/8	5.1.3 & 5.3		Rearrangement in the existing text as highlighted. Inclusion of procedure for dealing with negative feedbacks.....			
5	6/8	5.4.1, 5.4.3		Rearrangement in the existing text			
6	4 & 5 of 8	5, 5.1	15.07.2019	NABL replaced by NABL secretariat	NABL decision	-Sd-	-Sd-
7	6/8	5.3 d)	As highlighted				
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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The document describes the procedure for dealing with complaints received from various sources.
- 1.2 Complaints are the expressions of dissatisfaction, other than appeal, by any person or organization, to NABL, relating to its activities or of an accredited conformity assessment body, where a response is expected.
- Feedbacks are the positive and negative expressions by any person or organization against the services rendered.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This procedure deals with all complaints received by NABL from any source including information from regulators / government department - against the quality of the services provided, personnel involved in accreditation process, Accredited / Applicant Conformity Assessment Bodies (Testing including Medical Laboratories / Calibration Laboratories / Proficiency Testing Providers – PTP / Reference Material Producers – RMP).
- 2.2 This procedure covers complaints received vide any of the means like letters, e-mails, faxes, telephones (to be followed by written complaints), even relevant references appearing in print media.
- 2.3 All complaints are treated as confidential unless desired otherwise by the Government or by law.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

- 3.1 Any complaint against NABL shall be dealt by the sub-committee of NABL Board for Complaints & appeals. Designated sub-committee of NABL Board for complaints & Appeals, dealing with complaints against NABL, consists of one of the members of the NABL Board as Chairman; expert(s) co-opted by the Chairman as member(s); and CEO, NABL as the member secretary.
- 3.2 Primary responsibility for handling of complaints rests with the Complaints Manager, NABL. The Complaints Manager shall evaluate and investigate the complaint and if necessary adverse decision as per NABL 216 shall be recommended.
- 3.3 CEO, NABL is responsible for monitoring of complaints.
- 3.4 Complaints Manager is responsible for dealing the complaints against CAB.

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3.5 Assessor Monitoring Cell is responsible for actions on feedbacks (both positive & negative).

4. PROCEDURE

4.1 Receipt of Complaints

4.1.1 All complaints shall undergo initial scrutiny by the Complaints Manager to determine whether they fall within the ambit of NABL activities and whether they are valid, based on which any of the following action shall be taken.

- a) If a complaint is outside the ambit of NABL activities, the complainant shall be informed accordingly and the complaint shall be treated as closed.
- b) If information provided in the complaint is inadequate for any meaningful follow-up and the complainant is not able to provide minimum required information such complaints shall also be treated as closed and the complainant shall be informed accordingly.
- c) If the complaint clearly falls within the ambit of NABL activities and appears to be valid, the initial information provided is sufficient for initial investigation the same shall be taken up for further action.

4.1.2 All complaints received in NABL shall be channeled to the Complaints Manager who maintains record pertaining to all complaints including important dates like date of receipt, date of acknowledgement, date of closure or final disposal in form 26A.

4.1.3 On receipt, the complaint shall be acknowledged with the assurance that NABL will investigate the complaint and inform the complainant of the outcome at the earliest. Anonymous complaints shall also be registered if *prima-facie* they appear to be valid and having some substance with supporting evidence.

5. Investigation of Complaints

Complaints received by NABL broadly fall in three categories:

- a) Complaints against NABL Secretariat
- b) Complaints against CABs,
- c) Negative feedbacks against Assessors/ Accreditation Committee members

Procedure for dealing with each category of complaints is given below:

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5.1. Procedure for Dealing with Complaints against NABL Secretariat

- 5.1.1 When the complaint is against NABL secretariat, the same shall be dealt by the designated sub-committee of NABL Board for complaints & Appeals.
- 5.1.2 The Complaints Manager shall propose independent expert(s) in consultation with the Member Secretary of sub-committee of NABL Board for complaints & Appeals to the Chairman of the Committee for approval. The committee may seek clarification from the person(s) concerned. If an investigation is required, the Committee may include expert (s) as members to help the Committee.
- 5.1.3 If the investigation proves NABL secretariat's fault with adequate evidences/ proof of any officer's intentional involvement; the committee may place a report & propose action against the concerned to NABL Board. In such cases, QCI Conduct Rule shall be followed for imposing the disciplinary action.
- 5.1.4 The complainant shall be informed about the outcome of the complaint and action taken by NABL.

5.2. Procedure for Dealing with Complaints against CABs

- 5.2.1. The Complaints Manager where appropriate shall give opportunity to the CAB to address the complaint. When this is not appropriate, the officer may seek clarifications from the CAB and if required may depute NABL representative or an assessor or an expert with the approval of CEO,, NABL to the CAB to investigate the matter. All expenses related to investigation shall be borne by NABL.
- 5.2.2 The Complaint Manager shall analyze the findings of the investigation. If the investigations reveal serious concerns with respect to wrong representation of scope of accreditation, willful and/ or repeated misuse of NABL symbol etc. or in case of non-cooperation with the investigation process, the adverse decision shall be taken as per NABL 216.
- 5.2.3 Complaint Manager shall proceed further for implementation of the adverse decision as per NABL 216 through the Core Accreditation Committee. If the CAB is suspended/ debarred, the procedure as per NABL 216 shall be followed for the re-enrollment by dealing officer in close coordination with Complaints Manager.
- 5.2.4 The complainant shall be informed about the action taken by NABL.
- 5.2.5 If the complaint is found invalid, the complainant as well as the CAB shall be informed accordingly.
- 5.2.6 The concerned dealing officer of the CAB shall also be informed about the decision / action taken.

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5.3 Procedure for Dealing with Negative Feedbacks against Assessors/ Accreditation Committee Members

NABL shall be free to delete the names of an empanelled Assessor or make them Inactive without any correspondence, in the following cases:

- a) If he/she fails to report for pre-scheduled on-site assessment without sufficient reasons to the satisfaction of NABL.
- b) Due to his/her continued inability to accept on-site assessment assignments over a period of time without sufficient reasoning to the satisfaction of NABL.
- c) Due to indifferent attitude, improper conduct, disregard and non-compliance to the NABL rules and procedures.
- d) In case, Lead / Technical Assessor is found to be involved in any kind of malpractices and unethical practices like undue demand, accepting any kind of gifts or cash payment in any form from the CAB and breach of confidentiality.

5.4 Reporting on Complaints and other Related Actions

5.4.1 As an outcome of investigation of complaint and corrective action if felt necessary; the Complaints Manager shall inform the Quality Cell and corrective action shall be initiated by Quality Cell in line with the requirements of Procedure for Control of Non-Conformities and Corrective Action (NABL 012).

5.4.2 All records pertaining to complaints shall be maintained by the Complaints Manager. The status of complaints shall be reported to the CEO, NABL, who is responsible for monitoring of complaints.

5.4.3 The Complaints Manager shall analyze all the complaints and their outcome. If this analysis reflects certain trends, the trend and remedial measures will be reported to NABL Board.

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6. RECORDS

- 6.1 Complaints record shall be maintained in Form 26A.
- 6.2 Complaints file is maintained by Complaints Manager, where all correspondence in respect of complaints received, decisions, and any other relevant documents are filed date-wise.

NABL COMPLAINTS REGISTER

Sl.	Date Received	Name and address of Complainant	Nature of Complaint (brief)	Classification of complaint	Date of Acknow.	Outcome	Date Signed off

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