



1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide direction for the handling and processing of customer inquiries, complaints, disputes, and appeals regarding the operations and decisions of **UL Registrar** (UL). This procedure further describes rules and operations of the Appeals Committee. QSLP 2.5 establishes a formal method for documenting, classifying, analyzing, and responding to inquiries, complaints, disputes, and appeals from UL customers. A complaint against a UL customer or any other interested stakeholder who may feel harmed by any decisions or actions rendered by UL will also be allowed to enter into the inquiries, complaints, disputes, and appeals process as described herein.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This procedure applies to the activities of the management, staff, auditors, Committee for Safeguarding Impartiality, Certification Committee, Technical Committee, and the Appeals Committee of UL (**see QSLP 1.8 Committee Terms of Reference**).
- 2.2 The procedure is intended to be used to assist in and resolve inquiries, complaints, disputes, and appeals between any parties with an interest in the UL audit, certification, and/or decision making process. The appellant may dispute and appeal any decision and/or finding of UL pursuant to the rules laid out herein.
- 2.3 When an inquiry, complaint, dispute, or appeal is received from an SQF certified client, stakeholder, or other interested party, such inquiries, complaints, disputes, and appeals shall be made available to SQFI upon request. Where an inquiry, complaint, dispute, or appeal cannot be resolved between UL and the supplier, the matter will be referred to the SQFI Complaints and Appeals process.

3.0 Responsibility

- 3.1 The General Manager or their designee is responsible to:
 - 3.1.1 Ensure that an established documented system, which can respond to inquiries, complaints, disputes, and appeals from or against UL clients, is effectively implemented and carried out.
 - 3.1.2 Ensure that the Appeals Committee is established, operational, and meets as required to render resolutions for all appeals. Provide resources and information necessary to carry out various committees' duties and functions as defined herein.



3.2 Quality Assurance has the responsibility to:

- 3.2.1 Ensure that records of inquiries, complaints, disputes, or appeals are properly maintained and communicated to appropriate personnel.
- 3.2.2 Ensure that formally documented inquiries, complaints, disputes, and appeals that require internal corrective actions are addressed (**see QLSP 1.4 Corrective and Preventative Actions**).
- 3.2.3 Report the results of the inquiries, complaints, disputes, and appeals and their outcomes to the party in dispute or appeal, at which time they may be further analyzed.
- 3.2.4 Provide an analysis of all inquiries, complaints, disputes, and appeals and their outcomes during the Management Review Meeting, at which time they will be reviewed.
- 3.2.5 The Registrar, Quality Assurance Manager or their designee is the initial point of communication/contact when a complaint is received.

3.3 The Organization has the responsibility to:

- 3.3.1 Request resolution under the dispute process, and any appellant thereafter is responsible to complete formal documents required when submitting a dispute or appeal as requested by UL and as otherwise specified in this procedure.

In addition, an organization requesting resolution under the dispute process and any appellant thereafter shall review this procedure prior to initiating disputes or appeals in writing. The organization requesting resolution under the dispute process and any appellant thereafter shall be afforded the opportunity to object to any members of the UL Appeals Committee prior to commencing the appeal/dispute processes. Such objections must have justifiable grounds and reasons for disqualification of any appointed appeal committee member.



4.0 Definitions

Inquiry

An inquiry is any process that has the aim of augmenting knowledge, resolving doubt, or solving a problem that may potentially affect either the outcome of the audit or the certification of a facility.

Complaint

An informal or formal communication of dissatisfaction levied against a member of the UL staff, subcontracted personnel working on behalf of UL, or a UL client or any other stakeholder interested in the certification and/or audit process.

Dispute

A formal and documented communication/notification by which an audited organization seeks to reverse or reclassify the decision made regarding the outcome of the complaint by UL.

Appeal

A formal and documented communication/notification by which an audited organization for all UL accredited programs seeks to reverse a decision rendered through the dispute decision making process.

An appeal submitted by the appellant organization is one whereby the appellant is not satisfied with a decision or outcome and seeks to overturn the formal decision process.

Appellant

A supplier, organization, user, auditee, or other entity or individual with an interest in the specific audit and/or certification activities of UL, or one who wishes to dispute a finding, action, procedure, and/or appeal a decision of UL regarding any of its audit/certification activities.

The Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee, comprised of persons appointed by the General Manager of UL Registrar (UL), provides an independent, impartial ruling in the event that a client, public, or other interested party wishes to appeal any action taken by UL or any decision regarding the inspection and/or certification outcome handed down by UL. When an appeal is submitted, the Appeals Committee selected is free from any



commercial, financial, and other pressures that may influence the results of their decisions (**See QSLP 1.8 Terms of Reference**).

5.0 Customer Complaints

5.1 The Inquiry

5.1.1 Inquiries may be received via telephone, email, letter, or any other form of communication media by any employee. Upon receipt of an inquiry, the call or other communication media is forwarded to the Registrar, Quality Assurance Manager or their designee to determine whether or not it needs to be entered into the Inquiries, Complaints, Disputes, & Appeals Workflow for processing. The Registrar, Quality Assurance Manager or their designee will respond to the inquiring party within three (3) business days from receipt to determine whether it is an inquiry or a complaint as defined by 4.0 above.

5.2 Complaints - Registrar, Quality Assurance Manager

5.2.1 If the complaint is deemed valid, the Registrar, Quality Assurance Manager or their designee investigates the complaint by gathering facts and information. All complaints received within UL shall be documented in an email to the General Manager, Quality Assurance, Field Operations Manager, Operations and Technical Sales Director for information only.

If a complaint is not accepted, the Registrar, Quality Assurance Manager or their designee notifies the complainant of the reasons for not accepting the complaint and provides instruction on the dispute process if such dispute falls within the definition of Paragraph 4.0 of this procedure. The complainant will also be given the opportunity to provide additional evidence to support the complaint if deemed necessary.

5.2.2 The Registrar, Quality Assurance Manager or their designee formulates a conclusion in conjunction with the complainant and a decision is then made and documented in the Inquiries, Complaints, Disputes, and Appeals Workflow, as well as via email to notify the parties noted in Paragraph 5.2.1 with a cc email to the complainant as well regarding the decision rendered on behalf of UL.

Such decision may or may not lead to an agreed resolution between the parties. At this point if agreement cannot be reached at the complaint level then the Dispute process shall be initiated by the complainant in accordance with Paragraph 6.0.

When complaints cannot be resolved, the Disputes section of this procedure is engaged. Personnel, including those involved in the certification decision,



test, management system certification audit, etc., will not participate in any investigation except to provide access to information and/or records as requested

- 5.2.3 Customer complaints shall be tracked and trended by Quality Assurance in the Inquiries, Complaints, Disputes, and Appeals Workflow and are to be reported to the Management Review Board. Complaint reports are reviewed during Management Review. Management Review records serve as a log of complaints. All complaint records with responses and appeals are maintained for a minimum of 10 years after resolution.

5.3 Management Review

- 5.3.1 Inquiries, complaints, disputes, and appeals are evaluated during management review.

6.0 Disputes

6.1 Dispute process:

The first step of the dispute process is to formally notify UL of the intent to dispute a finding or appeal a decision rendered by UL. The disputant must then submit form QF 2.5-1 entitled, *Nonconformance Dispute Form* describing specific rationale and justification of why an audit finding should be reclassified, overturned, or reversed. The disputant must complete QF 2.5-1 for each finding in dispute; this is to determine if the outcome of the disputes will impact the audit results and/or certification decision.

6.2 Disputes shall be handled as follows:

- 6.2.1 The disputant notifies the office of their intent to dispute to any member in the UL office. The UL staff member forwards the request to the Registrar, Quality Assurance Manager at ULRegistrarQAResultRelease@ul.com. The Registrar, Quality Assurance Manager or designee, upon notification of a dispute, sends a copy of this procedure as well as QF 2.5-1 entitled, *Nonconformance Dispute Form*.
- 6.2.2 The Registrar, Quality Assurance Manager or their designee will notify the parties noted in Paragraph 5.2.1 of the potential dispute. Upon receipt of the dispute, all supporting documents are forwarded to an impartial department manager who shall take such actions as necessary to resolve the disputed matter in a timely manner.



6.2.2.1 Disputes that will **NOT** be considered:

- CAPA complaints not received within two weeks (14 calendar days) from the last day of the audit.
- CAPA findings being disputed due to the firm being unable to produce SOPs, records, and/or other audit evidence requested during the audit.
- Disputes submitted after the audit report is issued.
- Disputes submitted for the same nonconformance that was disputed before by a company and a decision had already been rendered that the nonconformance would stand as written.
- It is impractical for a firm to submit a dispute for every finding issued by the auditor. UL will consider any firm that disputes every CAPA as frivolous and such disputes will NOT be considered as valid and the CAPA will stand as written by the auditor for all CAPAs¹.

6.2.3 The dispute will be updated in the Inquiries, Complaints, Disputes, and Appeals Workflow for processing by the Registrar, Quality Assurance Manager or their designee. UL's written response will be issued prior to the 30th calendar day from the date that the impartial department manager renders their final decision.

6.2.4 If the dispute cannot be resolved in writing through the normal dispute and method within the specified time frames above, the disputant may file a formal appeal.

6.2.5 Regardless of the type of dispute, **all** disputes shall be submitted in writing on forms supplied by UL.

Failure to serve notice of a dispute through formal written notification will be considered an invalid dispute.

¹ At the sole discretion of the impartial department manager, limited CAPAs issued during the audit and then disputed will be considered (i.e. one or two CAPAs were issued and one or two CAPAs are being disputed). Documented justification, complete documentation, sound scientific rationale and/or other solid, logical and complete objective evidence shall be provided with the dispute of ALL CAPAs. Notwithstanding the bullets in 6.2.2.1 which will apply as a condition to bullet #5.



7.0 Appeals

7.1 All Appeals shall start out as a dispute in accordance with Paragraph 6.0. A request for an appeal of any decision rendered by the Certification Committee, Technical Committee, and/or the impartial department manager shall be filed by the appellant in the same manner as described in Paragraph 6.0.

7.1.1 An appeal cannot be filed if more than 30 calendar days have passed since the impartial department manager has issued their decision. Any appeal regarding the impartial department manager's decision will be deemed as resolved and UL will not accept further appeals after the 30 calendar days have expired. As such the appellant will need to start at the dispute level noted in Paragraph 6.0 in order to have the appeal considered.

7.2 The Appeal process shall be handled as follows:

7.2.1 The appellant notifies the office of their intent to appeal. The UL staff member forwards to the Registrar, Quality Assurance Manager at ULRegistrarQAResultRelease@ul.com. The Registrar, Quality Assurance Manager, or designee, upon notification of a dispute sends a copy of this procedure as well as QF 2.5-2 entitled, *Appeal Form*.

7.2.2 The Registrar, Quality Assurance Manager or their designee will notify the parties noted in Paragraph 5.2.1 that an appeal was received. Upon receipt of the appeal, all supporting documents are forwarded to the Appeals Committee who shall take such actions as necessary to resolve the appeal in a timely manner.

7.2.3 The Appeals Committee will be made of three members of the UL Committee for Safeguarding Impartiality whose members will be selected by the UL Registrar General Manager. A Chairman of the Appeals Committee will be selected from one of the three members appointed. This appointment will be made by the individual members themselves. The appellant will be given advanced notice and CVs and/or resumes of the appointed Appeals Committee.

7.2.3.1 The Appeals Committee meets as soon as practical after receipt of a formal appeal. If an appeal is not received by the 15th of the month the appeal may not be considered until the last Wednesday of the following month.



7.2.3.2 Appeals that will **NOT** be considered:

- CAPA dispute decision appeals not received within two weeks (14 calendar days) of the dispute decision.

- 7.2.4 The appeal will be updated in the Inquiries, Complaints, Disputes, and Appeals Workflow for processing by the Registrar, Quality Assurance Manager or designee.
- 7.2.5 Appellants shall have the right to make a personal presentation of their case before the Appeals Committee and be given the opportunity to object to any of its members.
- 7.2.6 All parties to the appeal process shall be notified of the intended meeting time and place at least 15 calendar days in advance of the meeting.
- 7.2.7 Appeal hearings are not legal proceedings. Therefore, UL shall be notified in writing at least 15 calendar days in advance if an appellant intends to have legal counsel present to ensure UL has sufficient advance notice so that it can also have legal counsel present.
- 7.2.8 If UL is not notified in writing within 15 calendar days that the appellants' counsel will be present but counsel shows for the hearing, then the appellant's legal counsel will not be allowed to be present during and the hearing will be considered to be a closed hearing.
- 7.2.9 Unless otherwise agreed in advance, any appeal hearings shall be conducted as follows:
- 7.2.9.1 Introductions;
 - 7.2.9.2 Presentation by the appellant, limited to 30 minutes;
 - 7.2.9.3 Presentation by UL, limited to 30 minutes;
 - 7.2.9.4 Rebuttals, limited to 10 minutes for each party;
 - 7.2.9.5 Questions by the Appeals Committee Members;
 - 7.2.9.6 Closing of the hearing, at which time the Appeals chair shall:



- Make a formal projection regarding the expected time frame for communicating the documented final decision (normally not to exceed two weeks).
- Dismiss the parties.

7.2.9.7 Following the hearing, the Appeals Members will deliberate without any involvement by the appellant or UL.

7.2.9.8 The Appeals chair shall document the Appeals Committee's decision and send it concurrently to the designated representatives of the appellant and UL.

7.2.9.9 The Appeals Committee's decision will be documented.

NOTE: Any notes made by Appeals Committee Members in preparing for the appeal, written, taken during the hearing, or during the subsequent deliberations will not be maintained and will be discarded.

7.2.10 The Appeals Committee, in advance of the hearing or rendering any decisions, may request additional documentation or statements from the appellant, expert witnesses, staff of UL, or others who may be needed to render a fair and objective ruling on the matter.

7.2.11 The Appeals Committee Chairperson will issue a ruling in writing, in as expeditious a manner as possible, without sacrificing the need for a fair, thorough, and objective review of the matter.

7.2.12 All meetings of the Appeals Committee shall be recorded by the secretary and the minutes shall be made available to all parties to the appeal except as described above.

7.2.12.1 All materials obtained, reviewed, and produced by the Appeals Committee shall be treated as UL management system records, and handled and stored accordingly, except as described above.

7.2.13 The Appeals Committee shall arrive at a decision by a two-thirds vote.

7.2.13.1 The secretary shall inform all parties of the final decision, in writing, normally not to exceed two weeks from the date of the decision or hearing, should a formal hearing take place.

7.2.13.2 The decision shall be signed by the Chair and Secretary of the Appeals Committee, whose decision shall be deemed final.



7.2.13.3 There is no further appeal process within UL once a final decision is rendered by the Appeals Committee.

Failure to serve notice of an appeal through formal written notification will be considered an invalid appeal.

8.0 Costs

- 8.1** For cases to be submitted to the Appeals Committee, the appellant shall enclose a check for \$5,000.00 USD as deposit against expenses that may be incurred in handling the appeal.
- 8.2** The appellant shall be responsible for reimbursement of UL for time and expenses incurred at the rates, then current and judged appropriate by the Appeals Committee.
- 8.3** The decision of the Appeals Committee shall contain the amount and apportionment of any costs incurred in the appeal process. Should the appellant win their case, the deposit shall be refunded in full.
- 8.4** Any surplus of the deposit made by the appellant shall be returned within thirty (30) calendar days of the decision. If the deposit is insufficient to cover the appellant's share of the costs incurred, the appellant shall pay the balance within thirty (30) calendar days of the decision.

9.0 Forms/Records

Records of all inquiries, complaints, disputes, and appeals shall be maintained in accordance with maintenance of quality records.

10.0 Associated Documents

These documents were referenced when developing this procedure:

ISO/IEC 17021 (current edition)
SAAS Procedure 200 (current edition)
ISO/IEC 17020 (current edition)
ISO/IEC 17065 (current edition)
Criteria for SQF Certification Bodies SQF Guidance on the Application of ISO/IEC
BRC Consumer Products Standard (current edition)



SA8000 Complaints

SA8000 Complaints are reviewed for relevance to provisions of SA8000 and for inclusion of documented evidence of non-compliance of the SA8000 client.

For SA8000, complaint investigations may include an unannounced audit and interviews with stakeholders, such as trade unions, NGOs, and the complainant. The investigation shall cover all elements identified in the complaint. Worker interviews conducted shall include information regarding how the worker can communicate with the CB and SAAS regarding additional information related to the audit, including contact information.

SAAS shall be notified within one (1) month of receipt of a complaint.

If the facility agreed to corrective action in the course of the investigation, that commitment shall be included. When the implementation of a facility's corrective action is confirmed, the confirmation is included in the report.

For complaints related to SA8000 certifications, if confidentiality is requested, the request shall be honored and information shared on a need-to-know basis with only appropriate parties. The client and the CB shall determine if a matter will be public.

When a complaint is made relevant to SA8000 by an interested party against a UL client, the client's management has the right to submit a written response to the allegations, which is included in the report. Such reports shall not breach confidentiality requirements and must be issued within 10 days of the rendering of the decision.


UL notifies SAAS of complaint resolutions.

Complaints received by SAAS regarding UL and/or UL clients:

- Acknowledge receipt of complaint from SAAS;
- Report to SAAS within 10 days of receipt;
- Report to SAAS on an ongoing basis every 30 days until the complaint is resolved;
- Contact the complainant directly as part of the investigation;
- Complete the investigation within 90 days; if more time is needed, seek agreement from the SAAS Director of Accreditation.

Per Advisory 200-1- Management of Complaints Related to SA8000 Certification Scheme:

1. At times, SAAS may receive information regarding a certified facility from a partner with whom SAAS or SAI, the owner of the SA8000 standard, has a relationship. This stakeholder may have information which leads to issues of concern about the certified facility which requires investigation by the CB. SAAS shall require CBs to treat such

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issues of concern as formal complaints and undertake an investigation per SAAS Procedure 200, 4.1 and as noted in the points above and correspond directly with the stakeholder.

2. There are times when the complainant or partner may wish to remain anonymous. It is understood that in such cases, SAAS shall act as a go-between at which point the CB shall send all correspondence to SAAS who will in turn liaise with the complainant.

3. In cases where the complaint relates to the audit itself, it is expected that when undertaking a complaints investigation, the CB shall assign personnel different than the audit team that performed the certification or surveillance audits at the client site involved in the complaint.