

	GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE	Doc no	P07.SC
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African Certification and Testing (PTY) Ltd, is committed to fostering a positive and supportive work environment for our staff, clients, auditors, and stakeholders. We acknowledge that from time to time, concerns, complaints, or disputes may arise. To ensure that issues are addressed effectively and fair treatment for all parties involved we have established the following grievance procedure.

The procedure is designed to provide a clear and transparent framework for resolving grievances. The procedure aims to facilitate open communication, encourage early resolution and maintain harmonious working relationships, within an ethical framework. We believe that addressing grievances promptly and equitably is essential to upholding our values and sustaining a productive and respectful workplace.

Staff, clients, auditors, and stakeholders are encouraged to voice their concerns without fear of retaliation. This procedure outlines the steps to be taken, from the initial raising of a grievance through to its resolution. By following these steps, we strive to ensure that all grievances are handled consistently, fairly, and promptly.

We are committed to listening to and resolving any issues that our employees, clients, and stakeholders may face.

The following complaint categories have been identified

Complaint Categories:	Reporting Channels:
Internal Staff Complaints	Verbal, written, QR Code
External complaints (Stakeholders, clients, workers - social audits conducted)	Verbal, written, QR Code
Anonymous Grievances	QR Code

All complaints will be classified by an initial risk rating based on the criticality or severity of the complaint.

The initial time frame of acknowledgment of the complaint will be determined based on the classification of the complaint.

The following complaint classifications have been identified

Colour Code	Classification	Definition	Timeframe
Red	Class 1	Very serious complaint. Can cause serious harm to workers, clients, stakeholders, the environment, or the company brand or reputation.	12 Hours
Amber	Class 2	Potential threat that could cause potential harm to workers, clients, stakeholders, the environment, or the company brand or reputation.	24 Hours
Green	Class 3	Type of complaint that does not hold the possibility of harm to workers, clients, stakeholders, the environment, or the company brand or reputation.	48 Hours

Reporting Channels for complaints

All lodged complaints will be investigated within 48 hours of initial receipt. All complaints will be formally investigated and recorded within 48 hours from the time that the complaint is lodged. Feedback to the individual who laid the complaint will be done based on the timeframe stipulated in the table under the classification section. No individual will be penalised or discriminated against for raising a grievance. The company ethos is to assist with training and development to prevent re-occurrences and does not condone punitive responses.

The following reporting channels are in place

Verbal via phone or in person

Written via company email addresses

Anonymously – via the company QR Code system

Escalation of complaints

Complaints classified as Red, which could seriously impact workers, stakeholders, auditors or clients might from time to time escalate where industry bodies, such as the GLOOBALG.A.P. secretariat, The Director at APSCA, or the Department of Labour and Employment or the board of ACT, might have to be notified. Should the investigation process determine that an auditor is guilty of an ethics violation or auditor code of conduct violation the company disciplinary process will be followed.

The overview below are examples of complaints and classifications, but results may vary depending on the severity and criticality of the complaints

Complaint Category	Complaint Example	Classification
Internal Staff complaints	Aggrieved by co-worker	Class 3
	Payment dispute	Class 3
	Behavioural concerns (Tone, Mannerism)	Class 2
	Behavioural concerns (Harassment, abuse, exploitation)	Class 1
	Ethical concerns regarding co-workers	Class 1
	Ethical concerns regarding the audit process	Class 1
External complaints (Stakeholders, clients, workers - social audits conducted)	Audit outcome dispute	Class 3
	Aggrieved by auditor	Class 3
	Behavioural concerns (Tone, Mannerism)	Class 2
	Behavioural concerns (Harassment, abuse, exploitation, action taken against workers after an audit)	Class 1
	Ethical concerns regarding a co-worker	Class 1
	Ethical concerns regarding the audit process	Class 1
Anonymous Grievances	Audit outcome dispute	Class 3
	Aggrieved by auditor	Class 3
	Behavioural concerns (Tone, Mannerism)	Class 2
	Behavioural concerns (Harassment, abuse, exploitation, action taken against workers after an audit)	Class 1
	Ethical concerns regarding a co-worker	Class 1
	Ethical concerns regarding the audit process	Class 1

Complaint Handling procedure

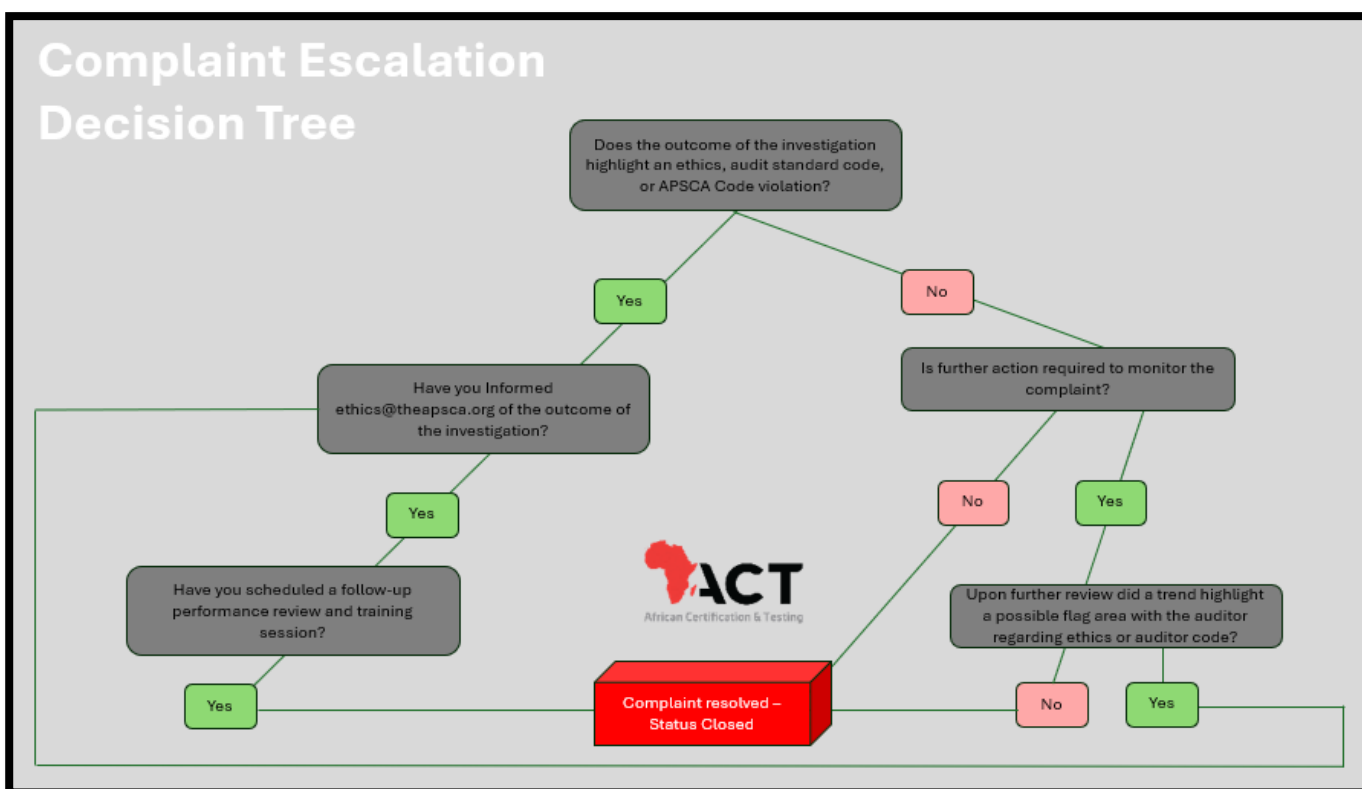
The complainant will not be victimised or sanctioned because of a whistle-blowing activity or complaint. In the case of an anonymous grievance, a detailed report will be kept on file after following the steps below. All complaints will be recorded, and trends will be analysed to ensure continual improvement. The company will ensure that investigations of misconduct are consistent, fair, and credible; and avoid conflicts of interest. The company will ensure that the subject of the investigation has an opportunity to be heard. When misconduct is substantiated, the company will ensure that appropriate corrective and preventative action is taken. The company will follow the 7-step complaint process as detailed in the flow chart below to resolve grievances.

Receipt of grievance/complaint	Receipt of the complaint via approved channel
Classification	Classification of complaint
Investigation	Engagement with all affected parties
Complaint response	Feedback to the complainant and possible notification to industry bodies
Internal review	Review of internal policies, procedures and practices to ensure preventative measures are put in place
Prevention	Calibration and training of team on revised procedures to prevent reoccurrences
Follow up	Follow up with complainant and team to ensure adequate resolution

The following process steps will be followed during the investigation process

Notification to team member	Notification sent to team member within 24 hours of the complaint being lodged. Opportunity given to the team member to present their side of the story.
Investigation process	Engagement with all affected parties.
Finalisation of investigation and disciplinary process (if applicable)	If required proceed with disciplinary action.
Inform Stakeholders	Inform APSCA or relevant scheme should an auditor be found guilty of an ethics violation or APSCA auditor code violation.
Remediation and Training	Develop improvement and training plan with the auditor. Continual review upon demotion to assistant auditor status. Shadow audits and reintroduction to lead auditor status only upon successful completion of remediation.

The following decision tree will be used to determine if the company must report a complaint to APSCA or the relevant scheme



The company will actively make clients, stakeholders, and staff aware of the procedure to promote a culture where concerns are shared with the management team. The company will aim to ensure that every complaint is handled with the utmost care, professionalism, and confidentiality. ACT are committed to resolving issues effectively and learning from them to enhance our services continually.

The company will actively engage with team members to create an ethos where feedback and complaints are seen as positive reinforcement and areas for improvement.

All feedback is invaluable to ACT, it helps to understand areas where ACT can improve and reinforces our dedication to providing exceptional service. ACT views every complaint as an opportunity for growth and improvement, and are dedicated to using feedback constructively.

Reporting illegal conduct to the local authorities

All auditors and personnel will be trained to identify where local legislation is breached. In serious instances, the scheme manager will be vigilant and proceed to notify relevant scheme contacts.

Examples of illegal conduct may include, but are not limited to:

Fraud, corruption, or bribery

Unsafe work practices that contravene legal requirements

Violations of labour or environmental laws.

A joint decision will be made if reporting to local authorities is required. If deemed required, the company will report the matter and a detailed record of all communication will be kept. The company will ensure that clear, concise information is provided. The company will assist in the investigation process and where required seek legal advice.