

Author/Owner:	Kurt Teuscher	Type:	Procedure
Approved by:	Kurt Teuscher	Revision:	Jul 20, 2020 Rev 3

Scope

This document describes the approach taken to appeals and complaints received in relation to all auditing and certification activities. The procedure applies to CICS Americas Inc.

Responsibilities

The **CEO** has overall responsibility to ensure this procedure is sufficiently implemented. The **CEO** is supported in its implementation by other Senior Management (Sales Manager and Business Support Manager) and the Advisory Board (Appeals Panel) as defined in this procedure.

The CICS Americas Inc. Advisory Board has the responsibility to act as an "Appeals Panel" as defined in the procedure "PR – Advisory Board". They will hear and consider appeals relating to all the CICS Americas Inc. certification activities. The Advisory Board members hearing each appeal shall be selected from the Advisory Board (other than the **CEO**) and shall consist of different members, none of whom shall have any commercial interest in the subject of the appeal. The Advisory Board members selected to hear any appeal will be appropriately qualified persons.

Procedure

Appeals: An appeal can be a request by a client or responsible party to CICS Americas Inc. for reconsideration of a decision that CICS Americas Inc. has made in relation to a certification. An appeal can be received via a variety of communication channels e.g. telephone, email, etc.

The process is as follows:

1. Any such appeal will be documented, and the appeal notified to the relevant senior manager (CICS Americas Inc. **CEO** and/or the Sales Manager) if not already notified via the appellant. The appellant will be encouraged to submit the appeal in writing supported by relevant facts and data for consideration.
2. If the Sales Manager has not been directly involved in the certification *i.e. as a Team Member or as the Technical Reviewer*, then that person shall attempt to resolve the appeal. If they have been involved or are unavailable (e.g. on holiday) then the Business Support Manager shall attempt to resolve the appeal (Note: whoever attempts to resolve the appeal shall be independent of the relevant certification activity and engagement).
3. If the appeal cannot be resolved, then the appeal may be referred to CICS' **CEO** or a member of CICS Americas Inc. Advisory Board, if the appellant so wishes. A meeting with the Advisory Board (*Appeals Panel*) shall be held within 90 clear days of receipt of such notice and the appellant shall be given at least 7 calendar days' notice of the time and place of such a meeting. The decision of the senior manager (or whoever actioned the appeal) shall stand, pending any meeting of the Appeals Panel. At such meetings, both the appellant and the Manager handling the appeal (or whoever actioned the appeal) shall be entitled to be heard in confidence. For practical reasons, pressure on time and expense, any/all appeals will be heard in the US **either physically or using any virtual meeting technologies**.

The decision of most of the "Appeals Panel" as declared by its members shall be final and binding on both the parties.

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Once the decision regarding an appeal has been made, no counterclaim by either party in dispute can be made to amend or change this decision.

The Advisory Board is responsible for the review and disposition of appeals and overview of the proper implementation of its decisions.

The Client has the right to appeal the CICS Americas Inc. decision to the appropriate accrediting body. The accrediting body may then review the appeal information and their sole duty shall be to determine whether CICS Americas Inc. appropriately followed this appeals procedure.

4. The CEO shall notify the appellant, in writing, of the members of the "Appeals Panel" and the appellant shall have the right to object, in writing to the CEO or to any member(s) of the "Appeals Panel". *This process shall also ensure that any decisions do not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.*

5. A register of all appeals logged, and their outcome is maintained, along with the names of the members of the Advisory Board sitting as the "Appeals Panel". Any corrective actions required to procedures as a result of the appeal shall be formally logged in the "LOG – Internal Concerns Action Request master control" with identification of appropriate actions undertaken.

Notes:

As part of the process, the appellant shall be informed of the receipt of the appeal, the appeals-handling process (direction should also be given to the CICS Americas Inc. website where the appeals and complaints procedure is mentioned in sections 15 and 16 of "IN-Conditions of Contract Certification") and the person/s who is/are to be initially engaged in the process.

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The appellant/complainant shall be formally notified of the outcome (item 4 above) along with the persons who undertook the investigation. This notification will form part of the records to be maintained as part of this process.

It may be that in some circumstances what was originally seen as a complaint may actually be an appeal in which case the reasons should be recorded.

Complaints: A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, other than an appeal, by any person or organization to CICS Americas Inc. in relation to any client or CICS Americas Inc. Service where a response is expected.

The process for handling complaints shall follow steps 1 – 5 above.

An additional step shall be ensured i.e.:

6. The confidentiality of the complainant and what the complaint is about shall be safeguarded from external parties.



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All CICS AMERICAS INC. Appeals and Complaints shall be documented in the Management Review.

Records

Record	Responsibility	Location	Period
Complaint	Sales Manager	CICS Americas Inc. Database	10 Years
Appeals Panel Findings and Decisions	Sales Manager	CICS Americas Inc. Database	10 Years
Formal notification of outcome	Sales Manager	CICS Americas Inc. Database	10 Years

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