

1.0 TITLE: GMCS APPEALS PROCESS

2.0 PURPOSE: To provide guidelines to clients and GMCS personnel on the handling of Appeals regarding GMCS audit findings and their classification.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY: Clients and GMCS personnel are responsible for following this procedure.

4.0 SCOPE: This procedure applies to all Appeals filed by GMCS clients. An Appeal would be filed if a client disagrees with the audit outcome (e.g. “not recommended for certification or maintenance of certification”), if a client disagreed with a finding or its classification (i.e. Major or Minor), or if a client disputes the validity of its certificate(s) being suspended or revoked). (NOTE: This procedure DOES NOT apply to Complaints which are handled separately under procedure GMCS-CP-0001).

5.0 QUALITY OBJECTIVE: To review and adjudicate the Appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of the Appeal being filed and to decide on whether Corrective Action is necessary.

6.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS: GMCS Corrective Action Procedure

7.0 PROCEDURE:

A. The Lead Auditor is responsible for clearly stating each nonconformance, if any, and the audit recommendation at the Closing Meeting. If the Client disagrees with the nonconformances (including classification) or the overall recommendation as stated by the Lead Auditor, the Client must indicate to the Lead Auditor that they do not agree with the finding, classification, and/or outcome. Failure to clearly indicate this issue to the Lead Auditor is equivalent to acceptance of the finding, classification, or recommendation, and the client would not be permitted to file an appeal UNLESS it can provide evidence that the audit report and/or CAR was different than what was stated during the Closing Meeting by the Lead Auditor.

B. The client should contact the President of GMCS via email (telephonic or mailed appeals will not be accepted) within thirty (30) calendar days of the audit ending or the suspension or revocation letter date (Leigh Brand, at LBRAND@GMCS.US) and provide the following information in the email: 1) Organization Name, 2) Organization Contact Name, 3) Organization Contact Phone and Email, 4) Date of Audit, 5) Name of Lead

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Auditor, 6) Specific disagreement with Audit Findings and/or Overall Recommendation (e.g. attach the Audit Report, Nonconformance Report, etc. and provide a detailed explanation of why the nonconformance and/or Audit Report and/or Overall Recommendation is wrong, invalid, or incorrect). Any appeal relating to the suspension or revocation of a client's certificate(s) must clearly state the basis of why the client believes that the suspension or revocation is invalid. The basis of any invalid decision is limited to the reasons outlined in the GMCS Procedure for Suspension, Withdrawal, and Revocation Procedure. Appeals filed after the thirty (30) calendar day deadline will not be accepted. Any outstanding invoices must be paid prior to the appeal being reviewed.

C. Upon receipt, the President will review the Appeal and will determine if sufficient information has been provided by the Appellant to initiate the Appeals Process. If sufficient information has not been provided, the President will communicate with the Appellant to ensure that sufficient information is provided or will close the Appeal. If sufficient information has been provided, the President has the authority to review the Appeal and render a decision (provided that he is not the auditor or on the audit team) OR to convene an Appeals Board comprised of two (2) approved Committee Members (members from the Committee on Impartiality and/or the Certification Committee) to assist in the process. The Committee members cannot be auditors involved with the Appellant appealing the decision of the audit team. The President is responsible for communicating the final decision on any appeals to the Appellant. The decision rendered by the President and/or the Appeals Board is final.

C. If an Appeals Board is convened, the Board will review all of the information provided by the Complainant and by the audit team and will render a final decision based on the information provided. At a minimum, the Board must interview the Appellant and the audit team members, review all audit documents, and review applicable standards before rendering a decision.

D. The President may choose to initiate Corrective Action in response to the Appeal and its outcome.

E. When the President is a member of the audit team whose finding is being appealed by a client, the President cannot adjudicate the appeal and shall refer the appeal to two (2) individuals who are not a part of the audit team.