



GAS.G-04:2025

## **Appeals and complaints procedure**

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## 0. FOREWORD

This Procedure defines the process for submission, registration, review, and resolution of appeals and complaints regarding the decisions and activities of the GAS Accreditation Agency and its appointed representatives.

The document is aimed at ensuring confidence in the GAS accreditation system, maintaining transparency and impartiality of its processes, providing timely responses to remarks, and eliminating nonconformities that may affect the agency's objectivity, competence, and reputation.

## 1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF APPLICATION

1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to:

- ensure a fair, transparent, and independent process for reviewing appeals and complaints;
- guarantee the protection of applicants and the absence of any retaliatory actions;
- ensure continual improvement of the GAS management system.

1.2 This Policy applies to:

- accreditation decisions;
- actions or omissions of assessors, experts, members of the Accreditation Commission, and GAS personnel;
- assessment procedures, witness observations, and surveillance decisions;
- conduct and compliance with ethical requirements.

1.3 Appeals and complaints may be submitted by any natural or legal person.

1.4 The submission of an appeal or complaint does not affect the current accreditation status of a body until the review is completed, unless otherwise determined as a result of the consideration.

## 2. NORMATIVE AND REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

This Policy is based on the requirements and principles of the following normative documents:

2.1 International Standards:

- **ISO/IEC 17021-1:2023** Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems — Part 1: Requirements;
- **ISO/IEC 17011:2017** Conformity assessment — Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies.

2.2 Internal GAS Documents:

- **GAS.G-01:2025** — Code of Ethics for Experts, Assessors, and GAS Personnel;
- **GAS.G-03:2025** — Policy on Conflict of Interest and Impartiality.

### 3. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The following terms are used in this Policy:

**Appeal** — a formal request from a conformity assessment body or another interested party to review a GAS decision that affects that party (e.g., denial of accreditation, suspension, scope reduction, or withdrawal of accreditation).

**Complaint** — a formal submission from an individual or legal entity concerning actions or omissions by GAS, its personnel, assessors, experts, or accredited bodies that may undermine confidence in the accreditation process or evaluation results.

**Whistleblower** — a person who provides information about a possible violation (including conflict of interest, impartiality, or ethical norms) that may affect the activities of GAS or accredited bodies.

**Appealing party** — a party submitting an appeal against a GAS decision.

**Complainant** — a party submitting a complaint to GAS.

**Respondent** — a person or organization whose actions or decisions are being appealed or complained about.

**Appeals Panel** — an ad hoc group of individuals authorized by GAS to impartially review and decide upon an appeal.

**Complaints Panel** — an ad hoc group of individuals authorized by GAS to analyze and resolve complaints.

*Note:* In cases of minor complexity, a simplified review procedure may be applied by an authorized GAS representative.

**Conflict of interest** — a situation in which the personal, financial, or professional interests of a person involved in the review of a complaint or appeal may influence, or appear to influence, their impartiality.

**Due process** — a documented procedure ensuring an objective, fair, and timely review, providing the parties with the right to be heard and to receive a reasoned decision.

**Decision on appeal/complaint** — an official GAS document containing the review results, conclusions, and any required actions.

**Anonymous complaint** — a complaint submitted without identifying the complainant; accepted by GAS for review with limitations related to the ability to verify its authenticity.

## 4. PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTING APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

### 4.1 Submission Channels

The Accreditation Agency GAS accepts appeals and complaints through the following channels:

- official GAS email address;
- web form available on the GAS website (gas.international);
- registered mail.

Anonymous submissions are accepted; however, their review may be limited by the ability to verify the facts.

### 4.2 Confirmation of Receipt

The Accreditation Agency GAS provides confirmation of receipt of an appeal or complaint within:

- **5 working days** from the date of receipt.

The confirmation includes a registration number and an estimated review timeframe.

### 4.3 Preliminary Analysis

An authorized GAS staff member performs a preliminary analysis within:

- **up to 10 working days.**

Based on the analysis, one of the following decisions is made:

1. to accept the submission for review;
2. to request additional information;
3. to reject the submission (with documented justification).

### 4.4 Formation of the Review Panel

For the review of an appeal or complaint, a temporary ad hoc Panel is established, which:

- consists of at least two members;
- includes individuals not involved in the original decision;
- operates according to the principles of impartiality and independence.

If necessary, the Accreditation Agency GAS may involve independent external experts.

Individuals with an actual or potential conflict of interest are not permitted to participate in the Panel.

## 5. PROCEDURE FOR REVIEW AND DECISION-MAKING

### 5.1 Review Timeframes

The standard timeframe for reviewing an appeal or complaint is:

- **up to 30 calendar days.**

If necessary, the period may be extended:

- up to a maximum **of 60 calendar days**,
- with written notification to the applicant and an explanation of the reasons.

### 5.2 Review principles

The review process is based on:

- objectivity and evidence-based assessment;
- impartiality and transparency;
- protection of confidential information;
- non-discrimination of the applicant;
- confidentiality when required.

### 5.3 Communication with the Applicant

The applicant has the right to:

- receive information about the review progress;
- provide additional evidence and explanations;
- be heard by the Panel (upon request or by decision of the Accreditation Agency GAS).

### 5.4 Decision-Making by the Panel

Based on the review results, the Panel may decide to:

- uphold the original decision;
- amend the decision;
- revoke the decision and initiate a re-evaluation;
- take corrective or disciplinary actions (in case of a substantiated complaint).

The decision must be issued in writing and include:

- justification;
- supporting evidence;
- deadlines for implementation (if applicable).

## 5.5 Notification of the Applicant

The applicant receives the official decision:

- in written form;
- within **5 working days** after the Panel's decision is made.

## 5.6 Closure and Record Retention

The Accreditation Agency GAS ensures:

- maintenance of a register of all appeals and complaints;
- retention of all related materials for at least 5 years;
- availability of documents to an international oversight body (upon request).

After completion of the appeal/complaint review process, all records are marked as “closed,” and access to them is governed by the GAS Information Protection Policy.

## 6. FINAL PROVISIONS

6.1 This Procedure enters into force on the date of its approval by the management of the Accreditation Agency GAS and is mandatory for all persons involved in the accreditation processes of GAS.

6.2 Responsibility for the organization of implementation, compliance monitoring, and updating of this Procedure lies with the authorized representative of the Accreditation Agency GAS, as designated by an internal order.

6.3 The Procedure shall be reviewed periodically — at least once every three years, or earlier if required by changes in international standards or internal GAS processes.

6.4 In the event of any inconsistencies between internal GAS documents, priority shall be given to the requirement of ensuring objectivity and impartiality in decision-making processes.

6.5 Statistics on the handling of appeals and complaints may be published in an aggregated form, without disclosure of personal data or confidential information (subject to GAS management decision).

6.6 The current version of this document is published on the official website: [\*\*gas.international\*\*](https://gas.international).