



**CERTIFIED ORGANIC ASSOCIATIONS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
ACCREDITATION BOARD**

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## **APPEALS ACCREDITATION POLICY**

### **INTENT**

This policy outlines the policy for handling appeals by the certification body against BCCOP accreditation decisions and COR recommendation decisions to the CFIA made by the Accreditation Board.

### **SCOPE**

This policy is intended for the AB, staff and Certification Bodies. Other interested parties may obtain a copy on request.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of the AB Director to amend this policy as needed. This policy is approved by the COABC BOD.

### **RELATED PROCEDURE/DOCUMENTS**

- *See Appeals Procedures*

## **APPEALS POLICY**

### **1. RESPONSIBILITY**

- 1) The COABC Accreditation Board has exclusive responsibility for BCCOP accreditation decisions as well as for recommending accreditation status to the CFIA as an accredited Certified Verification Body (CVB).
- 2) The Accreditation Board is responsible for conducting the appeal process and subsequent decisions.
- 3) Investigation and decisions on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions.

### **2. VALIDITY OF APPEAL**

- 1) Certification Bodies have the right to appeal accreditation decisions and recommendations made by the COABC Accreditation Board to the CFIA provided they meet the following:
  - a. The appeal is regarding a final accreditation decision or recommendation (e.g. Suspension or Cancellation of Accreditation);
  - b. The appeal includes evidence of a justifiable procedural error, misinterpretation or inconsistency relative to the AB's previous decisions;

- c. The appeal is received in writing along with all necessary supporting evidence;
  - d. The appeal is made within 30 working days of notification of the decision or recommendation.
- 2) Challenges to individual points of compliance (e.g. NCs or OFIs) are considered objections and may not be appealed. Objections are first reviewed by the AB Director and are brought to the AB for final review.

### **3. TWO-STEP PROCESS POLICY**

- 1) The Appeal process shall be conducted in two parts:
- a. Step 1: Dispute Resolution Process,
  - b. Step 2: Appeal Process.
- 2) CBs must pursue the Step 1 process before initiating the Step 2 process.

#### **3.1. STEP 1: DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

- 1) The Dispute Resolution Process is used by the AB as a collaborative first step prior to a more formal second step of the appeal process. The dispute resolution process encourages detailed discussions of the case and endeavours to reach a decision at the conclusion of the process that is both equitable and clearly defensible.
- 2) The AB shall appoint a Chair of the Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) from among its number. The DRC shall convene only when there is a need for its services. The Chair of the committee shall appoint two COABC Accreditation Board members on the Dispute Resolution Committee.

#### **3.2. STEP 2: APPEAL**

- 1) In the event that the CB still does not agree with the COABC Accreditation Board appointed DRC, they may pursue an appeal to the COABC Board of Directors.
- 2) The scope of appeal to the COABC BOD is exclusive to reviewing the fairness of the process and cannot result in the COABC BOD making an accreditation decision or a recommendation for accreditation decision. The COABC BOD must provide rationale of their final decision and provide a written report.  
The AB will review the BOD's findings, reevaluate the accreditation decision if necessary and communicate the final outcome to all parties.
- a)

### **4. RECORDS OF APPEALS & NOTIFICATION TO CB**

- 1) The COABC Accreditation Board and the COABC Board of Directors shall keep records of all appeals, of final decisions and of follow-up actions taken. The records shall be available for inspection and audit by BCMA or CFIA.

**5. CORRECTIVE ACTIONS**

- 1) When an appeal is upheld, the appeal shall be reviewed at the Internal Audit to review if the initial decision was the result of a failing on the part of the Accreditation Board, and to determine appropriate corrective actions.
  
- 2) Any corrective actions shall be implemented as soon as possible.