

C.A.F.E. Practices Complaints and Appeals Procedure

Corporate Procedure 5D

1 Introduction

1.1 The procedure is available to C.A.F.E. Practices suppliers, verification organizations (VOs), and other stakeholders in the affairs of SCS Global Services and who have reason to question the actions of SCS Global Services regarding C.A.F.E. Practices findings or program requirements, or file a complaint against the C.A.F.E. Practices program. The procedure is applicable to any formal decision rendered by SCS Global Services or complaints filed against the C.A.F.E. Practices program. SCS Global Services is responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to process the complaint or appeal a decision, and for all decisions at all levels of the appeals-handling process.

2 Definitions

2.1 **Complaint:** A written expression of dissatisfaction, by any person or organization, relating to the activities of SCS Global Services or any party participating or appearing to participate in the C.A.F.E. Practices program, where a response from SCS Global Services is appropriately requested in accordance with this procedure. Complaints may relate to the conduct or procedures of suppliers, certification bodies/verification organizations, auditors, or SCS Global Services.

2.2 **Appeal:** A request by a supplier or verification organization for formal reconsideration of any adverse decision made by SCS Global Services pertaining to the C.A.F.E. Practices program. Such requests will be resolved by SCS Global Services in accordance with the company's Investigation Process. Submission, investigation, and decision on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.

2.3 **Feedback:** Specific instances of suppliers or verification organizations providing information, preferably written, about aspects (e.g., quality, timeliness, responsiveness) of SCS Global Services' services regarding the C.A.F.E. Practices program. Feedback is recorded by C.A.F.E. Practices staff and assessed as to whether a response is required. Negative feedback may also be forwarded to the SCS Global Services Quality Assurance (QA) department and may be addressed internally by SCS Global Services through the internal corrective action process. Suppliers or verification organizations may choose to elevate negative feedback to a Complaint if it is not satisfactorily addressed.

2.4 **Dispute:** An appeal that cannot be satisfactorily resolved between the supplier or verification organization and SCS Global Services and therefore requires resolution from SCS Standards. For disputes between suppliers and verification organizations, please follow the Dispute Procedures outlined in the C.A.F.E. Practices Operations Manual.

2.5 **Supplier:** An entity or entities undergoing C.A.F.E. Practices verifications by contracted verification organizations, and subject to audits by SCS Global Services.

2.6 **Verification Organization:** An organization approved by SCS Global Services and contracted by suppliers to conduct C.A.F.E. Practices verification work. Verification organizations are audited by SCS Global Services.

3 Lodging a Complaint

3.1 Issues between parties should be resolved at the lowest level possible. When a complaint is held against a supplier or verification organization, parties should make all reasonable efforts to resolve the issue directly with those involved, including providing an opportunity for the respondent to remedy the situation. If resolution is not found, complaints against the C.A.F.E. Practices program or its stakeholders shall be submitted to SCS Standards via the web form located at <https://www.scsstandards.org/request-comment-complaint-appeal> or via email at standards@scsstandards.org. The SCS Standards Complaint Procedure will be followed.

3.2 In the case of general complaints against SCS Global Services, the complaint should be submitted to the SCS Global Services Quality Assurance (QA) department via the webform located at <https://www.scsglobalservices.com/about/your-feedback> or via email at complaints@scsglobalservices.com and a response will be sent **within five (5) business days** confirming receipt of complaint and the SCS Global Services Complaint Procedure will be followed, found on the web page listed above.

4 Appeals Standing

4.1 In the case of appeals, the appellant must lodge its appeal with the C.A.F.E. Practices program **within twenty (20) business days** after official notification of the finding or decision.

4.1.1 For suppliers, the Supplier Appeal Form must be filled out and sent to C.A.F.E. Practices at cafepractices@scsglobalservices.com

4.1.2 For verification organizations, the VO Appeal form must be filled out and sent to C.A.F.E. Practices at cafepractices@scsglobalservices.com

4.2 To have standing under this procedure, the appeal must include the following information:

- Contact information for the appellant and all General Information filled out in the Appeal Form.
- Whether the appeal relates to incorrect findings or another specified topic.
- In the case of suppliers, relevant entity ID(s), name(s), type(s) and indicator(s).
- In the case of verification organizations, relevant nonconformity(ies), report evidence, auditor evaluation, details of the appeal, and previous C.A.F.E. Practices staff responses.
- Attachments of any supplementary documentation that provide an explanation as to how the finding is incorrect, being as specific as possible with respect to the applicable requirements.

5 Appeal Investigation Process

5.1 Upon receipt of an appeal form, the C.A.F.E. Practices program will undertake the following actions:

- Open an appeal file in which all materials and correspondence associated with the appeal will be maintained.
- Acknowledge receipt of the appeal **within one (1) business day**, informing the appellant that its appeal is being reviewed for standing.
- Should the appeal qualify for an investigation, select an individual to investigate who is independent of the issued finding or decision.
- Provide a written response to the appellant **within three (3) business days** of receipt of the appeal, informing appellant as to whether or not the appeal qualifies for investigation under this procedure, and outlining the investigation process using the Appeal Plan template and the recourse available to the appellant.

In addition, personnel (including those acting in a managerial capacity) who have provided consultancy for a supplier or verification organization, or been employed by the supplier or verification organization, shall not be used by SCS Global Services to review or approve the resolution of an appeal for that supplier or verification organization within two years following the end of the consultancy or employment.

5.2 The assigned investigator will undertake the following tasks:

- Solicit and collect any additional information necessary to investigate the appeal. The investigation will be based primarily upon written documentary evidence supplied by the appellant along with the appeal form. It is the appellant's burden to establish that there has been an action taken in contravention of a requirement. The investigator may augment the documentary evidence submitted by the appellant with phone and email interviews. The investigator may elect to conduct a field inspection to augment the documentary evidence.
- Prepare a written report in which the investigator's findings and recommendations are presented.
- Inform the appellant in writing of the disposition of the appeal and provide the report to all parties along with the final decision. Under normal circumstances, the report will be completed **within ten (10) business days** of receipt of the appeal. For appeals of findings with a shorter response due date, an extension to the due date will be granted while the appeal is being investigated.
- Update findings and reports, and send updated versions to all relevant parties, where appropriate.

5.3 If the appellant accepts the proposed decision or action, the decision or action is carried out and recorded.

5.4 If the appellant rejects the proposed decision or action by the C.A.F.E. Practices program, the appellant should direct the complaint to SCS Standards for further investigation as part of a dispute resolution.

5.5 In the event that no response is received from the appellant ***within twenty (20) business days*** after the last communication, the appeal will be deemed closed.

5.6 SCS Global Services shall ensure that decisions on appeals do not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.

6 Confidentiality

6.1 Personally identifiable information concerning the complainant/appellant is available only where needed for the purposes of addressing the complaint/appeal within the organization and is actively protected from disclosure except to those parties directly involved, unless the complainant/appellant expressly consents to its disclosure.