

Disputes and Appeals

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1.0 SCOPE

This procedure covers the handling of disputes and appeals of PTC decisions, including the evaluation of participant proficiency testing performance.

2.0 POLICY

PTC will investigate and adjudicate all disputes and appeals of PT decisions in an impartial and timely manner.

3.0 PROCEDURE

3.1 OVERALL PROCESS

The PTC appeal process is a two-step system. The first step is the dispute of a PT report or other PTC decision. Disputes are generally handled by PTC staff. Should the participant disagree the outcome of the dispute they may appeal the dispute decision.

3.2 INITIATING A DISPUTE OR APPEAL

Except as specifically provided below, a participant may submit a dispute regarding PTC program delivery at any time.

A participant shall only be entitled to submit a dispute with respect to a PT study report within 10 calendar days of receiving a final or revised PT report.

A participant shall only be entitled to submit an appeal of a decision rendered with respect to a dispute within 30 calendar days of receiving notice of the decision.

3.3 DISPUTES/APPEALS LOG

All disputes and appeals shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Director (or designate) responsible for the affected PTC program, who shall, immediately on receipt, record it in F05 – *Disputes and Appeals Log*.

This Log will include the date of the dispute/appeal, the name and participant number (if applicable), the issue, the date resolved, and the decision taken.

The Executive Director maintains the Disputes/Appeals log. The log and the documented disputes and appeals form part of the information to be reviewed during the annual Quality System Review in accordance with PROC05– *Quality System Review*.

3.4 ACTION UPON RECEIPT

Disputes and appeals that are received will be logged and an investigation will be conducted by the Executive Director (or designate).

In the event that the Executive Director receiving a dispute or appeal believes that the issues raised therein may adversely affect the public image of PTC or call into question the integrity or credibility of any PTC programs, the Executive Director shall immediately report the dispute or appeal to the Board Chair.

3.5 INVESTIGATION AND ADJUDICATION

3.5.1 Disputes

Disputes are reviewed and investigated by the Executive Director. The disputant is informed and the resulting outcome is documented as part of the Disputes/Appeals Log entry for each dispute.

If the facts validate the dispute, the Executive Director shall notify the disputant and take whatever steps are necessary to satisfy the disputant. This could include, but is not limited to, issuing a revised PT report, modifying policy or procedure, refunding fees, notifying all possibly affected participants, etc..

3.5.2 Appeals

Appeals are reviewed by the Executive Director. When the review is complete and all relevant documentation compiled, the Executive Director will arrange with the Board Chair to appoint an Appeal Panel of a minimum of two members of the PTC Board of Directors.

The composition of the Appeal Panel is documented by the Executive Director and retained with the appeal. The Executive Director acts as secretary to the Appeal Panel but does not get involved in any discussion other than providing objective evidence to the panel when asked. All documentation provided to the appeal panel is edited to remove anything that could identify the appellant.

The Appeal Panel will decide to either:

- agree with the original decision and deny the appeal; or,
- uphold the appeal and reverse or modify the original decision, or require PTC staff to modify an operational policy.

In considering an appeal of a published PTC policy, the Appeal Panel may only make recommendations. If changes to policies are deemed necessary, the policies will be reviewed and approved by the appropriate person(s) as identified in the Master Document List.

The investigation and the decisions of the Appeal Panel are to be part of the Disputes/Appeals Log entry for each appeal. The decisions of Appeal Panels of the Board are final.

3.6 COMPLETION AND CLOSURE

3.6.1 Dispute

Once a decision has been made with respect to a dispute, the Executive Director (or designated staff) communicates the decision to the disputant. If necessary, revised documentation, such as a revised PT report is then forwarded to the disputant. Staff shall ensure that the decision is communicated to the disputant as soon as possible after the decision is made.

3.6.2 Appeal

In the case of appeals, the Executive Director drafts the correspondence for the signature of the Chair of the PTC Board, to communicate the decision of an Appeal Panel to the appellant. The Executive Director closes the entry in the log.

3.7 REVIEW OF DISPUTES AND APPEALS

All disputes and appeals are reviewed during the annual management review.

4.0 FORMS AND LOGS

- F05 – *Disputes and Appeals Log*.

5.0 HISTORY OF CHANGES

| Date | Rev. No. | Sections | Changes |
|------------|----------|----------|---------------------|
| 10/10/2017 | 1.0 | | Initial publication |