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1. Definitions

CSD: Certification Services Division

Certification Manager: For the purpose of this document, the Head of CSD is the Certification Manager

IPC:Independent Personnel Certification

ATO: Authorized Training Organization

CMC: Certification Management Committee

Complaint: For the purpose of this document, a Complaint is: a criticism of the IPC process, a criticism of the IPC administrative body; a criticism of an IPC ATO; or a criticism of an IPC certificate holder

Appeal: For the purpose of this document, an Appeal is an appeal against IPC or the IPC administrative body, for failure to certify

Method: For the purpose of this document, 'Method' is a word used to describe an NDT technology such as: Ultrasonic Testing, Magnetic Particle Testing, Radiography Testing or Eddy Current Testing etc.

Category: For the purpose of this document, 'Category' is used to describe a Method sub group such as: Magnetic Particle Testing Level 2 Welds; or Level 3 Ultrasonic Testing of Wrought Products; or Level 1 Eddy Current Testing of General Wrought Products etc.

2. Delegation:

2.1 On occasions, the Head of Certification Services Division may delegate responsibilities and actions to the Operations Supervisor or others if appropriate.

3. Information for complainants or appellants:

3.1 All complaints or appeals must be made in writing, using the appropriate form attached (see 6. below). Each complaint or appeal will be acknowledged, investigated and resolved. Verbal complaints will not be accepted.

3.2 Complaints may be made by any individual (e.g. a certificate holder, a certificate holder's employer, or a client of an employer) against the IPC process, the IPC administration body, a IPCATO, or a IPC certificate holder.

3.3 Appeals may be made against a decision taken by IPC not to award a certificate, to withdraw or cancel a certificate, or not to renew a certificate, or reduce the scope of a certificate.

3.4 Submission, investigation and decision on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.

3.5 Any action determined by the Head of Certification Services Division or the Complaints and Appeals Panel regarding a substantiated complaint will be notified to the IPC certification holder, the IPC ATO or the IPC administration body (whichever is appropriate) at the appropriate time.

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3.6 The appointed Complaints and Appeals Panel will meet and review all relevant material within 4-6 weeks of receipt of a written complaint or appeal and decide upon the appropriate action to be taken by the Head of Certification Services Division.

3.7 Where the Complaints and Appeals Panel cannot, for whatever reason reach a decision, the matter will be referred to the IPC Management Committee or in exceptional circumstances (as determined by the Certification Management Committee), Impartiality Council.

3.8 When a Code of Conduct complaint about an IPC certificate holder, who is also a member of Meena International, is substantiated, the outcome of the investigation will be referred to Impartiality Council.

3.9 The Constitution, Terms of Reference and Method of Working for the IPC Complaints and Appeals Panel are included as Appendix 1.

4. Process

4.1 The Head of Certification Services Division will endeavor to deal with complaints and appeals without recourse to committee. Where this is not possible, or where the complainant or appellant insists, the matter will be put before a properly constituted panel.

4.2 Ordinarily, complaints are handled by correspondence with the complainant/appellant who may submit written representations.

4.3 As part of the investigation, the Head of Certification Services Division will correspond with all appropriate parties, including the complainant and the IPC certification holder or the IPC ATO or the IPC administration body, in order to determine the facts.

4.4 On receiving a complaint or an appeal, the Head of Certification Services Division will decide whether there is sufficient information to consider the complaint or appeal and make a decision. In the case where there is insufficient information, the Head of Certification Services Division will correspond with all connected parties to gather more information and where appropriate will use one or more of the data collection forms attached.

4.5 Once sufficient information has been obtained, the Head of Certification Services Division will decide whether to manage the complaint or appeal himself/herself or constitute a Complaints and Appeals Panel. In the case where a complaint is against the IPC administration body, a Complaints and Appeals Panel must be constituted.

In all cases, outcomes will be reported to the Certification Management Committee.

4.6 Once the complaint or appeal has been considered and a decision has been made, the outcome will be corresponded to all interested parties (as determined by the Head of Certification Services Division or Complaints and Appeals Panel).

4.7 Depending on the outcome, the complainant or appellant will have 15 working days to appeal the decision. After the appeal against the decision has been considered and adjudicated upon, no further appeals will be allowed unless new evidence is forthcoming.

4.8 As stated in 3.7 and 3.8 above, the Head of Certification Services Division or Complaints and Appeals Panel will determine whether the complaint or appeal is notified to Impartiality Council as part of the CMC report or whether it is referred to Impartiality Council for further consideration.

5. Guidance on outcomes:

5.1 Appeals

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If it transpires that the IPC administrative body has made a mistake when making a decision not to award a certificate, to withdraw or cancel a certificate, not to renew a certificate, or reduce the scope of a certificate, then the decision should be reversed as soon as possible without further costs to the appellant.

All other appeals will be considered on their own merits; however, no decision by the Appeals Panel should be seen to be circumventing due process, inasmuch as, a certificate holder must have demonstrated his/her competence by passing the appropriate examination in accordance with the rules.

Other decisions by the Appeals Panel could include 'issuing a certificate subject to certain conditions', 're-sitting part of an examination', 'gaining more experience', 'additional surveillance' or any other measure that is seen to be fair and appropriate.

5.2 Complaints

5.2.1 IPC process - For the purpose of this document, complaints about the IPC process is confined to published IPC documentation and local procedures used to manage the certification process; complaints about individuals' use and interpretation of the IPC documentation and local procedures are likely to be made against the IPC administrative body or an ATO. As the IPC published documents undergo a rigorous review and approval process, it is unlikely that complaints will be made against the content of these documents; however, if a complaint is made and upheld regarding these documents, then the document in question will be referred to the General Technical Committee for review and recommendation.

5.2.2 IPC administrative body – If a complaint is made against the IPC administrative body, then care should be taken to confine the investigation to the use and interpretation of the IPC documentation and working procedures; any issue relating to employment with Meena International will not be discussed but will be referred to the CEO of Meena International and the Head of Certification Services Division for separate consideration. If it transpires that a complaint against the use and interpretation of the IPC documentation and working procedures is upheld then the matter needs to be rectified as soon as possible and if appropriate an apology issued.

5.2.3 IPC ATO – With regards to a complaint against an ATO being upheld, it is very difficult to predetermine penalties without knowing the severity of the offence. However, some suggestions are listed below in descending order:

Mild response:

- Letter from the Head of Certification Services Division pointing out the error of their ways.
- Letter from the Head of Certification Services Division demanding better performance in the future
- Require an ATO to re-train an individual at their own expense (or part thereof).
- Immediate audit of an examination center
- Temporarily suspending operations of an examination center
- Immediate audit of the ATO
- Temporarily suspending operations of an ATO

Uncompromising - Withdraw accreditation response

In the event that a complaint against an ATO is not upheld, then subject to discussions with the ATO, it may be possible that the outcome maybe be published in the website, in order to avoid an unwarranted impact on commercialization; the ATO has the final say on whether to publish or not.

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5.2.4 IPC certificate holder – If a complaint is made against a IPC certificate holder, it is likely to be for one of two fundamental reasons, either there is an issue relating to technical competence or there is an issue relating to the Code of Conduct.

If a complaint is made about an IPC certificate holder's technical competence, then only penalties relating to the Method should be considered. However, within the Method, you may wish to apply the penalties to one or more Categories, for example: if a Certificate Holder holds Ultrasonic plate, pipe, nozzles and nodes but the complaint is about a specific pipe inspection, you may wish to apply the penalties just to the pipe category, alternatively, if the complaint is more generic in nature, like incorrect calibration, incorrect choice of probes or incorrectly setting of ultrasonic gain, you may wish to apply the penalties to the whole ultrasonic Method. The penalties could include:

- Immediate re-training and re-examination of the Category
- loss of Category and/or Method certification for a short period of time, then reissue certification
- loss of Category and/or Method certification for a short period of time, then re-training and re-examination
- loss of Category and/or Method certification for a long period of time, then reissue certification
- loss of Category and/or Method certification for a long period of time, then re-training and re-examination
- loss of certification for a year or more and reversion to initial candidate

Note: All these penalties should have a time associated with them.

If the complaint is about a IPC certificate holder not complying with the Code of Conduct then penalties ought to be considered for all Methods and not just the Method for which the complaint applied to, for example: if the IPC certificate holder is found guilty of falsifying ultrasonic reports and apart from Ultrasonic Inspection he/she holds certification in MPI and Radiography, then the penalties should apply to all three Methods. Depending on the severity of the offence, penalties could include:

- loss of Method certification for a short period of time, then reissue certification
- loss of Method certification for a long period of time, then reissue certification
- loss of all Methods certification for a short period of time, then reissue certification
- loss of all Methods certification for a long period of time, then reissue certification
- suspension for a year or more and reversion to initial candidate
- Suspension from Meena International membership
- Reporting to the Police

Note: All these penalties should have a time associated with them.

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6. Appendices and Data Collection Forms

Appendix 1 IPC Complaints and Appeals Panel

Because the information required may be different depending on whom the complaint is about, a number of data collection forms have been created to accommodate different circumstances.

Form 1 Complaints against an IPC certificate holder

Form 2 Complaints against a IPC ATO

Form 3 Complaints against the IPC administrative body

Form 4 Complaints against a IPC process

Form 5 Appeal against IPC or the IPC administrative body, for failure to certify

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Appendix 1

IPC Complaints and Appeals Panel

1. Constitution

1.1 The IPC Complaints and Appeals Panel shall be constituted of not less than four ordinary members including the Certification Manager, a member of the IPC Management Committee and one other to be concerned solely with the interests of the complainant or appellant. At least one member of the Panel will have technical expertise relevant to the complaint or appeal under consideration, e.g., for a complaint or appeal concerning a Radiation Protection Adviser, the Panel will include a certificated RPA member.

1.2 No person having a direct interest in the complaint or appeal shall serve on the Panel. One of the Certification Management Committee members will chair the meeting of the Panel.

2. Terms of reference

The Panel will be responsible to the IPC Certification Management Committee for assessing individual cases of complaint or appeal.

3. Method of Working

3.1 The Head of Certification Services Division will gather all necessary information from the parties concerned in order that the case can be fully assessed by the Panel.

3.2 A Panel shall be convened by the Head of Certification Services Division within 4-6 weeks of receipt of a complaint; a scheduled IPC Management Committee meeting could be used to facilitate such a meeting.

Note: If an appeal or complaint is urgent, the Head of Certification Services Division has the authority to convene a panel as soon as the appropriate information is gathered.

3.3 The Panel shall take into consideration all the material submitted when reaching a decision. Where the Panel is able to reach a unanimous decision, the Head of Certification Services Division will implement the decision and submit a brief report of the circumstances and decision to the next meeting of the IPC Certification Management Committee.

3.4 If the decision of the Panel is not unanimous, it shall be referred to the next ordinary meeting of the IPC Certification Management Committee whom shall either make a decision by a majority of 75% of attending voting members or if thought appropriate, refer the case to Impartiality Council.

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Form 1

This form is for initiating a formal complaint against an IPC certificate holder:

Name of Complainant:	Complainant's Company/Employer:
Complainant's position in Company:	Nature of Company/Employer business:
Complainant's address:	
Complainant's telephone number:	Complainant's email id
Date of complaint:	Isolated / Repetitive Incident:
Name of individual subject to complaint:	Candidate's Unique ID:
Is the nature of complaint 'Technical' or 'Code of Conduct:	
Summary of Complaint:	
Signature of Complainant:	Date:

All complaints or appeals can either be edited online or can be filled in writing. The completed forms shall be mailed to:

Mr. Ashwin K V (Certification Manager) at ashwin@meenainternational.com

The editable word format of the form will be mailed to the appellant on the request by him to the Certification Manager.

Both parties will be given a fair chance to support their case and based on the merit of the case, both parties will be allowed to testify in front of the panel enquiring the complaint.

Note: The travel and boarding expense shall be taken care by the person who wants to represent their case.

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Form 2:

This form is for initiating a formal complaint against an IPC ATO

Name of Complainant:	Date of complaint:
Complainant's telephone number:	Complainant's email id
Complainant's address:	
If you are making a complaint on behalf of an Employer please complete the shaded boxes:	Complainant's Company/Employer:
Nature of Company/Employer business:	Complainant's position in Company:
Name of ATO subject to complaint:	
Address of ATO subject to complaint:	
Summary of complaint:	
Signature of Complainant:	Date:

All complaints or appeals can either be edited online or can be filled in writing. The completed forms shall be mailed to:

Mr. Ashwin K V (Certification Manager) at ashwin@meenainternational.com

The editable word format of the form will be mailed to the appellant on the request by him to the Certification Manager.

Both parties will be given a fair chance to support their case and based on the merit of the case, both parties will be allowed to testify in front of the panel enquiring the complaint.

Note: The travel and boarding expense shall be taken care by the person who wants to represent their case.

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Form 3:

This form is for initiating a formal complaint against the IPC administrative body

Name of Complainant:	Date of complaint:
Complainant's telephone number:	Complainant's email address:
If you are making a complaint on behalf of an Employer please complete the shaded boxes:	Complainant's Company/Employer:
Nature of Company/Employer business:	Complainant's position in Company:
If you are making a complaint against an individual within the IPC administrative body, please complete the box below:	
Name of individual the complaint is about:	
Summary of Complaint:	
Signature of Complainant:	Date:

All complaints or appeals can either be edited online or can be filled in writing. The completed forms shall be mailed to:

Mr. Ashwin K V (Certification Manager) at ashwin@meenainternational.com

The editable word format of the form will be mailed to the appellant on the request by him to the Certification Manager.

Both parties will be given a fair chance to support their case and based on the merit of the case, both parties will be allowed to testify in front of the panel enquiring the complaint.

Note: The travel and boarding expense shall be taken care by the person who wants to represent their case.

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Form 4:

This form is for initiating a formal complaint against a IPC process

Name of Complainant:	Date of complaint:
Complainant's telephone number:	Complainant's email address:
If you are making a complaint on behalf of an Employer please complete the shaded boxes:	Complainant's Company/Employer:
Nature of Company/Employer business:	Complainant's position in Company:
What specific process/processes are you complaining about (summary):	
Summary of complaint:	
Signature of Complainant:	Date:

All complaints or appeals can either be edited online or can be filled in writing. The completed forms shall be mailed to:

Mr. Ashwin K V (Certification Manager) at ashwin@meenainternational.com

The editable word format of the form will be mailed to the appellant on the request by him to the Certification Manager.

Both parties will be given a fair chance to support their case and based on the merit of the case, both parties will be allowed to testify in front of the panel enquiring the complaint.

Note: The travel and boarding expense shall be taken care by the person who wants to represent their case.

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Form 5:

This form is for initiating a formal Appeal against IPC or the IPC administrative body for failure to certify

Name of Appellant:	Date of appeal:
Appellant's telephone number:	Appellant's email address:
If you are making an appeal on behalf of an Employer please complete the shaded boxes:	Appellant's Company/Employer:
Nature of Company/Employer business:	Appellant's position in Company:
Name of individual the failure to certify affected if different from the Appellant:	Candidate's unique ID:
Summary of appeal:	
Signature of Appellant:	Date:

All complaints or appeals can either be edited online or can be filled in writing. The completed forms shall be mailed to:

Mr. Ashwin K V (Certification Manager) at ashwin@meenainternational.com

The editable word format of the form will be mailed to the appellant on the request by him to the Certification Manager.

Both parties will be given a fair chance to support their case and based on the merit of the case, both parties will be allowed to testify in front of the panel enquiring the complaint.

Note: The travel and boarding expense shall be taken care by the person who wants to represent their case.