



P-03

COMPLAINTS, DISPUTES AND APPEALS



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Reference Documents

- Article 6.4 Accreditation Standard
- Article 6.4 Accreditation Procedure



1 Objective

This procedure describes the process to receive, manage, evaluate, investigate and make the decisions and take the appropriate corrections and corrective actions on complaints, disputes and appeals from clients or other interested parties, related exclusively to the Article 6.4¹ mechanism accreditation activities.

Clients or other interested parties have the right to disagree with the measures taken by VERIFIT during audits or after signing the validation or verification/certification contract. The customer may register his or her complaint, dispute or appeal as defined in this section.

In the case of complaints, disputes and appeals, the evaluation of the effectiveness of the actions taken is carried out in the management review meetings.

This procedure will be available upon request from clients or interested parties.

2 Complaints

A complaint is a formal expression of dissatisfaction (made verbally, electronically or in writing) regarding the performance of Verifit in relation to its validation or verification/certification functions from any source including but not limited to clients, activity participants, the general public or its representatives, government bodies and non-governmental organization.

To file a complaint, the complainant shall send an email to contato@verifit.com.br detailing the complaint and annexing supporting evidence, if applicable.

The receipt and verification of information to evaluate the validity and investigation of the complaint is the responsibility of the Certification Director, with the support of the Technical Director, who will also be responsible for proposing corrective actions for this complaint. If the complaint is directed to an assessment process in which the Certification Director is involved, the Managing Director has the responsibility of investigating and handling the complaint with the support of the Technical Director. If the complaint is directed to a process in which the Technical Director is involved, the Certification Director and the Managing Director have the responsibility of handling the complaint.

The validity of the complaint will be recognized in the following cases:

- if the complaint refers to a real non-compliance with accreditation requirements/rules;
- if the complaint refers to a real non-compliance with the requirements/rules of the VERIFIT A.6.4² management system; and/or
- if the complaint refers to a real legal non-compliance.

The procedure for handling the complaint will be the following:

1. As soon as the complaint is received, the Certification Director, or, if directly involved with the complaint, the Managing Director or Technical Director must contact the complainant to:
 - a. acknowledge receipt;
 - b. inform who in Verifit will be handling the complaint and that it shall not be handled by individuals directly involved in the subject of the complaint;
 - c. inform that the handling of the complaint will not result in any form of discrimination actions towards the complainant;
 - d. request more details if necessary; and
 - e. inform estimated time for an official response by VERIFIT.
2. The complaint and its handling will be recorded using the form **F-08_Complaint, Dispute or Appeal**.
3. Those responsible for handling the complaint will make all the necessary investigation and will have up to 15 business days to return it to the complainant with the following results:
 - a. **Valid:** in this case, a NC must be raised using form **F-02_Non-Conformity and Corrective Action** and proceed in accordance with MSM VERIFIT, section 11, ensuring that appropriate corrections and corrective actions are taken. The person responsible for handling the complaint must inform the client indicating the actions taken.
 - b. **Not Valid:** in this case, the complainant will be notified of the outcome of the investigation.

¹ And GS4GG.

² And GS4GG.



4. In case more time is necessary, and if feasible, a progress report will be provided to the complainant before the decision about the validity is reached and communicated to the complainant (as per point 3 above).

3 Disputes

The dispute is a disagreement between a DOE and its client regarding the DOE's recommendation and/or opinions/decisions made at various stages in the course of its validation and/or verification/certification activities.

To file a dispute the client shall send an email to contato@verifit.com.br detailing:

- the project name and contract number,
- the decision being disputed with a detailed explanation why the decision is being disputed
- annexing supporting evidence, if applicable.

The dispute must be filed by disputant within 15 business days from receipt of the decision being disputed or it will not be considered valid.

The receipt and verification of information to evaluate the validity, investigation and decision of disputes is the responsibility of the Certification Director, with the support of the Technical Director. If the dispute is directed to an assessment process in which the Certification Director is involved, the Managing Director has the responsibility of investigating the dispute with the support of the Technical Director. If the dispute is directed to a process in which the Technical Director is involved, the Certification Director and the Managing Director have the responsibility of investigating the dispute.

The validity of the dispute will be recognized if the finding(s) raised by audit team which are under dispute (which prevents a positive opinion and lead to an adverse recommendation/opinion/decision) is/are not in complete alignment with A.6.4³ standards and related guidance.

The procedure for handling the dispute will be the following:

1. As soon as the dispute is received, the Certification Director, or, if he is directly involved with the dispute, the Managing Director or Technical Director must contact the disputant to:
 - a. acknowledge receipt;
 - b. inform who in Verifit will be handling the dispute and that it shall not be handled by individuals directly involved in the subject of the dispute;
 - c. inform that the handling of the dispute will not result in any form of discrimination actions towards the disputant;
 - d. request more details if necessary; and
 - e. inform estimated time for an official response by VERIFIT.
2. The dispute and its handling will be recorded using the form **F-08_Complaint, Dispute or Appeal** and.
3. Those responsible for handling the dispute will make all the necessary investigation and will have up to 15 business days to return to the client with the following results:
 - a. **Valid:** in this case, a NC must be raised using form **F-02_Non-Conformity and Corrective Action** and proceed in accordance with the MSM VERIFIT, section 11, ensuring that appropriate corrections and corrective actions are taken. The person responsible for handling the dispute must inform the client indicating the actions taken.
 - b. **Not Valid:** in this case, the disputant will be notified of the outcome of the investigation.

4 Appeals

The appeal is a request made by the client for a formal review of a decision taken by VERIFIT in respect of its validation and/or verification/certification activities.

To file an appeal the client shall send an email to contato@verifit.com.br detailing:

- the project name and contract number,
- the decision being appealed with a detailed explanation of why the decision is being appealed
- annexing supporting evidence, if applicable.

³ Or GS4GG.



The appeal must be filed by disputant within 15 business days from receipt of the decision being appealed or it will not be considered valid.

The receipt and appointment of independent appeal panel is the responsibility of the Certification Director, with the support of the Technical Director.

The validity of the appeal will be recognized if the finding(s) raised by audit team which leads to an adverse recommendation/opinion/decision are not in complete alignment with A.6.4⁴ standards and related guidance.

The procedure for handling the appeal will be the following:

1. As soon as the appeal is received, the Certification Director must contact the appellant to:
 - a. acknowledge receipt;
 - b. inform that the appeal will be handled by an independent appeal panel, which appointed member(s) shall be individuals not directly involved in the subject of the appeal;
 - c. inform that the handling of the appeal will not result in any form of discrimination actions towards the appellant;
 - d. request more details if necessary; and
 - e. inform estimated time for reaching the final decision which will be made by the independent appeal panel.
2. The appeal and its handling will be recorded using the form **F-08_Complaint, Dispute or Appeal**.
3. The Certification Director must establish within 10 business days an independent appeal panel which will be responsible for handling the appeal. The independent appeal panel shall be composed of independent and impartial auditor(s) and/or expert(s) qualified in the respective standard, according to the **F-11_Qualification Matrix**, who were not involved in the assessment which is subject to appeal.
4. The independent appeal panel will investigate, analyze the objective evidence, seek clarifications from appellant and/or assessment team, and decide within 15 business days whether the appeal is:
 - a. **Valid:** in this case, a NC must be raised using form **F-02_Non-Conformity and Corrective Action** and proceed in accordance with the MSM VERIFIT, section 11, and the independent appeal panel shall define the actions to be taken. The appellant must be informed indicating the actions taken.
 - b. **Not Valid:** in this case, the appeal form must be completed with the appropriate justifications and the client informed of the result of the analysis.

VERIFIT will inform the appellant that it has the option of making a complaint to the Supervisory Body⁵ in case he is not satisfied with the decision.

5 Confidentiality, impartiality and independence.

Confidentiality (related to the complainant, disputant or appellant and the subject of the complaint, dispute or appeal), impartiality and independence are ensured in the conduct of the process. The people handling the process shall be different from those who carried out the VVC activities or are directly involved in the subject of the complaint/dispute/appeal. All actions taken by VERIFIT towards independence ensure that decisions on complaints, disputes or appeals do not result in discriminatory actions against the applicant.

6 Associated Records

- a. Communication (in writing) of complaint, dispute or appeal received by Verifit;
- b. Communication issued by Verifit (in writing) concerning the complaint, dispute or appeal;
- c. Form **F-08_Complaint, Dispute or Appeal** ;
- d. Form **F-02_Non-Conformity and Corrective Action**

Document revision history:

⁴ Or GS4GG.

⁵ Or Gold Standard.



<u>Revision</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Description and reason for revision</u>
Rev. 03	16/10/2025	- Removal of section 2, leaving only one email address to receive all cases.
Rev. 02	25/08/2025	- Inclusion of GS4GG requirements
Rev. 01	03/03/2025	- General revision of the procedure
Rev. 00	30/10/2024	- Initial adoption