



Institutional Review

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

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Introduction

Saudi Skills Standards aim to carry out their work to high standards and expect that all our Institutional Reviews will be of a consistently high quality and proceed smoothly and without incident. Occasionally concerns may arise about some aspects of the Institutional Reviews. This policy of procedures sets out the approach for handling complaints about our work in Saudi Skills Standards.

Saudi Skills Standards take complaints very seriously and will undertake to do what we can to resolve the issue. We regard them as an important way of improving the quality of our work. Complaints inform us about the aspects of our work that may have worked less well and this feedback supports self-evaluation and improvements in the way we work with organizations and people and conduct our business.

Saudi Skills Standards will investigate all complaints fairly and effectively and deal with the issues arising from these as quickly as possible. Where our work has not met the high standards that we set, we will accept and acknowledge this and take steps to remedy the situation as quickly as possible. Clearly any complaint needs to be justified and have clear supporting evidence. Disappointment with the outcome of an Institutional Review does not represent sufficient grounds on which to make a complaint.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure document is to establish a standard method for processing complaints regarding SSS IR-Framework, policies, and procedures, SSS staff members, on-site review teams, or any party acting on behalf of the institutional review department at SSS.

Principles

All complaints about the work of Saudi Skills Standards will accord with the following principles:

- Complaints will be handled promptly and with rigor.

- Complaints will be handled in a fair and even-handed way, treating all parties in similar circumstances both equitably and respectfully.
- The investigation of complaints will be thorough and objective. Where we investigate a complainant's dissatisfaction with the judgments awarded at an Institutional Review, the outcome of the investigation may result in no change or a judgment upwards or downwards.
- Confidentiality will be respected as far as possible, both for those who complain and those who are the subject of a complaint. However, the identity of complainants may be revealed to the persons complained about where their response is essential in order for us to investigate and respond fully and fairly to the complainant's concerns.
- Where appropriate, we will ensure that complaint responses include a suitable apology for any aspects upheld, and details of any corrective action or other redress that will be undertaken.
- Our handling of complaints will be monitored and quality assured regularly to ensure it is effective and leads to improvements in the way we work.

Initiative investigation

Complaints against the IR Framework and reports, policies, procedures, IR staff members, on-site review teams, or any party acting on behalf of the institutional review department are diligently and objectively investigated by the Quality Assurance Committee QAC.

Quality Assurance Committee QAC

The QAC will handle all complaints and appeals that an institution may raise against the IR reports.

QAC Responsibilities

- The QAC is responsible for addressing all complaints they receive. The committee attempts to find a suitable resolution and respond to the complainant in a timely manner.

- The Quality Assurance manager is responsible for documenting any complaints that are received and promptly forwarding the information to the committee chair or designee.
- The QAC chair or designee is responsible for reviewing any complaint, collecting necessary information and resolving the issue if possible or forwarding the complaint for review by the convened QAC members.
- The QAC reviews complaints and determines whether the complaint is justified and recommends appropriate action.

General Policy

For Saudi Skills Standards to consider a complaint:

Communication

- Email

Formal complaints should be submitted by email to ircomplaints@SSS.org.sa. We will confirm receipt of all complaints submitted through this email address.

- Contact details

Complainants must provide contact details and indicate their availability to enable the investigating officer to communicate with them as part of our complaints investigation process.

Phone Call

As part of all complaint investigations, the investigating officer will contact the complainant by telephone to discuss the concerns and to establish if any, or all, aspects can be resolved quickly. Wherever possible, we will attempt to resolve complaints through professional dialogue at an early stage of receiving concerns. Investigating officers will confirm to complainants the agreed main areas of complaint that will be subject to thorough investigation.

Focus

Complainants must provide a concise account of their concerns, details of any actions already taken to resolve these, and what they expect should happen as a result of their complaint.

Information

As part of carrying out the investigation, the investigating officer will consider in detail all the information submitted and issues raised by the complainant. This will include, as appropriate, consideration of the review evidence and responses from the review team to the concerns raised. The investigation will involve other senior colleagues from SSS where necessary. No additional documentation received after the submission of the complaint will normally be considered.

Multiple Complaints

Where multiple complaints are received about the same incident or issue of concern, Saudi Skills Standards may choose to undertake a single investigation covering a similar complaint from different individuals. This would lead to a single investigation response which would be communicated to all complainants.

Response to a Complaint:

- Written responses will be provided for all complaints investigated.
- Responses will provide a clear conclusion on whether or not the complaint has been upheld and may link together similar issues for conciseness and clarity.
- Responses may include reference to review evidence as appropriate to explain review outcomes.
- On occasions, where the evidence is inconclusive because of differing opinions that cannot reasonably be resolved through independent corroboration, the outcome will be recorded as 'no decision could be reached'. Where this occurs, the reasons for not reaching a conclusion will be clearly explained.

- On occasions, where the comments is selective or the evidence is indecisive, the outcome will be recorded, as “no changes should be made to the final judgment”. Where this occurs, the reasons for not changing the final judgment will be clearly explained.

Types of Complaints

There are two types of complaints as following:

1- General complaint:

SSS defines a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our work that requires a response.

Policy:

- An institution submitting a complaint against the IR policy, procedures, framework, and IR staff or reviewers, the QAC attempts to find a suitable resolution and respond to the complainant in a timely manner.
- If a concern is about a SSS reviewer, this should be raised with the lead reviewer as soon as possible during the review visit. This includes concerns about:
 - The review process
 - How the review is being conducted
 - The reviewer’s judgments

In most cases these concerns can be considered and be resolved before the review is completed

2- IR Report Appeal:

SSS defines IR report appeal as any expression of dissatisfaction against an IR report decision.

We expect that in the first instance all complaints about our work will be raised, wherever possible, directly with the individuals concerned as soon as these arise. This provides an opportunity for all parties to resolve the matter quickly.

We recognize the benefits of resolving concerns at the earliest opportunity through dialogue and strongly encourage that such an approach, is adopted wherever possible before making a formal complaint. However, we recognize that occasionally a complainant may choose to escalate their concerns.

Policy:

- An institution submitting an appeal against the IR report, the current IR report will continue to be approved, until after the hearing and determination of its appeal.

Complaint Duration

▪ **Receiving of complaints:**

- In regards to the IR reports, complaints and appeal should be submitted to SSS within ten (10) working days of receiving the approved report of the institutional review. Complaints sent after this period will not normally be considered as they will be deemed to be 'out of time'. This is to ensure that any concerns can be investigated as soon as possible and acted upon promptly.

▪ **Screening of Complaints**

- SSS aims to respond to all complaints as quickly as possible. A written response will be sent to the complainant as soon as is practicable and normally within twenty (20) working days of the date of receipt. The complaint response will include an explanation of any steps that Saudi Skills Standards will take as a result of the investigation

Complaints feedback

- Saudi Skills Standards takes complaints very seriously and endeavors to handle concerns objectively, fairly and efficiently. Complainants are invited to provide feedback on how their concerns were handled by emailing ircomplaints@SSS.org.sa. Feedback will be used

to improve our complaints handling process and improve the quality of our investigations and responses where appropriate.

Procedure for Processing a Complaint

- A written response will be provided for all formal complaints considered by Saudi Skills Standards.
- All complaints of the IR nature will be:
 - Received by the IR email and then
 - Proceeded to the Quality Assurance Committee QAC
 - The QAC will review the complaint and may request additional information from the complainant
 - The QAC will respond to a complaint, in writing, within 20 working days of the date of receipt.

Costs of Reviewing an IR Report

All institutions that choose to appeal the Advisory Commission decision of the IR report will pay a \$2,000 (7,500 Saudi Riyal) fee. Payment is not contingent on the Advisory Commission's decision. This fee helps cover the cost of convening the IR Advisory Commission and QA Committee, compiling documents, and related staff time.

