



Policy on Stakeholder Feedback to INAB

PS25

Introduction

INAB is committed to offering a professional standard of accreditation services and welcomes all feedback from applicant/accredited clients and all other stakeholders/interested parties about the services it provides. There are a number of mechanisms through which stakeholders can submit this feedback.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform applicant/accredited clients and other INAB stakeholders (end-users of accredited services, regulators) of the feedback mechanisms available to them to submit feedback to INAB on its accreditation services.

Scope

Part 1 of this policy applies to all INAB activities and describes the feedback mechanisms to be used for highlighting where discrepancies are identified or where improvements could be implemented in INAB activities. These include client feedback, assessor feedback and formal complaints.

Part 2 of this policy describes the feedback mechanisms to be used by applicant/accredited clients for disagreements in relation to recommendations of INAB assessment teams and in relation to any adverse decisions on a client's accreditation status. These include a right of reply process and an appeals process.

This policy does not apply to general client management interaction which is conducted directly with a client's assessment manager using the accreditation queries system in the INAB CRM portal.

Feedback Mechanisms - Part 1

1. Client Feedback

The client feedback form IP09F2 is available on the INAB website and all clients are encouraged to submit both positive and negative feedback. All client feedback reports are to be submitted to the INAB quality manager who is responsible for their investigation and follow-up.

Assessment managers also process all regulator feedback received through this client feedback system.

Where the client is not satisfied with the outcome from the client feedback process, the client can escalate this to a complaint (see section 6).

2. Feedback from Regulators

INAB has signed agreements with certain regulators/national authorities. Any feedback to INAB on applicant or accredited conformity assessment bodies (CABs) covered by these agreements shall be directed to the INAB manager, in the first instance. Such feedback, if negative, will be processed as a complaint.

3. Other End User Feedback (e.g. members of public using INAB accredited services)

INAB will from time to time receive negative feedback from a third party about the activities of accredited or applicant CABs.

It is acknowledged that accredited CABs are ultimately responsible for the correctness and validity of the accredited service provided and therefore, INAB will request that in the first instance, the CAB addresses any negative feedback/complaint through its own complaint handling procedure.

When negative feedback or a complaint is made against an organisation applying for accreditation, INAB shall take all necessary measures to preserve the confidentiality of the applicant organisation and shall not divulge or confirm that the organisation is an applicant.

4. CRM – Accreditation Queries

There is a query system on the INAB client portal. All clients are requested to use this mechanism to submit queries in relation to their accreditation. The assigned assessment manager will review and respond through the CRM.

5. Assessor Feedback

Assessors/experts who identify discrepancies or anomalies in INAB activities (e.g. where assessors/experts are unable to comply with a specific element of a procedure) shall report the discrepancy or anomaly to the quality manager who will use the internal feedback process in INAB to address the issue identified.

Assessors/experts are also encouraged, in line with INAB's policy for continual improvement, to provide feedback to the management of INAB on areas where operational activities and procedures could be improved.

6. Complaints

Complaints are to be submitted in writing to the manager of INAB clearly stating the nature of the issue and containing the name and contact details of the complainant. The manager of INAB reviews the complaint submitted to evaluate the complaint and assigns it to the quality manager for investigation. Where it is not possible to verify the source or authenticity of the complaint, INAB will not proceed further with such submissions.

Complaints are accepted if they are relevant to INAB or to activities pertaining to the scope of accredited CABs or to activities which could bring INAB accreditation into disrepute.

Further details on the complaint process are found in INAB regulations available on www.inab.ie

Feedback Mechanisms - Part 2

1. Right of Reply to Recommendations raised by INAB Assessment Teams (see AF119 form)

Applicant/accredited clients that disagree with recommendations made by the INAB assessment team at assessment visits have the right to reply to the manager of INAB within 3 working days of notification of the recommendation. This is not considered an appeal, as appeals are made against accreditation decisions or the failure to make an accreditation decision.

The manager of INAB will consider the documented right of reply submission as part of the decision-making process on the related recommendation.

2. Appeals Mechanism for Adverse Decisions on Accreditation Status

Applicant/accredited clients who disagree with an adverse decision taken by INAB relating to its accreditation status have the right to appeal the decision via INAB's independent appeals board, which is appointed by the board of the Health and Safety Authority.

An appeal is to be submitted in writing to the manager of INAB clearly stating the nature and justification for the appeal. An appeal is required to be made within 30 days of the date of decision. Further detail on the INAB appeals process may be found in the INAB regulations.

Contact

Further information on how INAB processes the above forms of stakeholder feedback may be obtained by contacting your assessment manager or by contacting:

The Irish National Accreditation Board

Metropolitan Building, James Joyce Street, Dublin 1, D01 K0Y8.

Tel: 01 6147182

Email: inab@inab.ie