

PROCEDURE FOR PROBATION, SUSPENSION, WITHDRAWAL AND REDUCING THE SCOPE OF CERTIFICATION

1. **PURPOSE**

- a. To define the processes for probation, suspension, withdrawal and scope reduction of an organization's registration.

2. **SCOPE & DEFINITIONS**

- a. Applies to all AQA India Issued Management Systems certifications.
- b. Probation: A minor and strictly internal warning measure communicated only to organizations, which do not conform to AQA requirements and the Accreditation body requirements.
- c. Suspension: A serious warning measure communicated to organizations suspending the use of the Certificate granted until the withdrawal procedure is applied. which do not conform to the AQA requirements and also Accreditation Body requirements.
- d. Withdrawal: An action of ceasing registration initiated by AQA India, in which the certified organization does not exist in the register of certificates clients and ceases to be the client of AQA India.

3. **RESPONSIBILITY**

- a. Client Relations Managers shall initiate probations, suspensions and recommend withdrawals of the Clients with the approval of the Vice President.

4. **PROCEDURE**

It is AQA India's policy, that the Client Relations Manager will communicate the clients through email or by post/courier to the address of the client presently available as per the directory of registered clients about the non-conformances to the requirements of AQA India and the accreditation body, specifying the time duration within which the requirements are to be met.

4.1 **Probation:**

4.1.1 Probation is issued to the clients in the following circumstances:

- 4.1.1. a) Client not conforming to 6 monthly Surveillance assessment – The probation period shall not exceed 6 months.
- 4.1.1. b) Client not conforming to 9 monthly Surveillance assessment – The probation period shall not exceed 3 months
- 4.1.1. c) Client not conforming to 12 monthly Surveillance assessments in case of 2nd Surveillance assessment from the initial registration or re-registration – The probation period shall not exceed 6 months.

4.1.2 Client Relations Manager with the approval of the Vice President shall send a probation letter to the client who have failed to conform to the above requirements with a stipulation of the period within which the surveillance is to be completed (Other than the requirements as mentioned in 4.2.1.a).



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4.2. **Suspension**

- 4.2.1 Client relations Manager with the approval of Vice President shall initiate Suspension for registrations under following conditions:
- a) Client not conforming to 12 monthly Surveillance assessments in case of 1st Surveillance assessment from the initial registration or re-registration.
 - b) The certified client does not allow surveillance or recertification audits to be conducted at the required frequencies. (The date of the first surveillance audit following initial certification/ Re-registration shall be within 12 months from the last day of the stage 2 audit/RR audit).
 - c) The client's certified management system has persistently or seriously failed to meet certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the management system – AQA India and Accreditation Body requirements
 - d) The certified client does not allow surveillance or witness audits at the request of Accreditation bodies or special audits to be conducted at the required frequencies, or
 - e) The certified client has voluntarily requested a suspension.
 - f) Organization's failure to take corrective actions to identified nonconformance(s) within the stipulated period.
 - g) If the client not responded within the stipulated period for completion of the surveillance assessment period as mentioned in 4.1.2 above.
 - h) If the client violates the agreement conditions, including use of logo and certification marks.
 - i) The client's failure to meet the financial obligations for the services provided by AQA India, within 60 days from the date of Invoice at the discretion of AQA India.
 - j) The organization violates the spirit and intent of the registration in such a way as to damage the image of AQA India.
- 4.2.2 Any suspension should not last longer than 90 days, but exceptions may be made at the discretion of AQA India with documented justification, in case of force majeure clauses as per agreement.
- 4.2.3 The decision for any extension or concessions to the clients due to extraordinary circumstances (such as natural disasters / force majeure, seasonal operations) shall be documented and considered by AQA India in responding to the probations and suspensions. (Refer IAF:ID3 (latest edition) short term and long term measures are taken and documented).
- 4.2.4 Accounts Executive will co-ordinate with Client Relations Manager with reference to the financial dues to the clients in cases of outstanding for more than 60 days.
- 4.2.5 The Suspension letter will require conduct of an audit by a specified date. The letter will state that the registration will be subject to withdrawal if this audit is not conducted by the specified date.
- 4.2.6 The list of suspension clients will be updated in www.aqa.in by the Vice President (ADMN) once in 30 days.
- 4.2.7 During Suspension the registered organization is allowed to retain the certificate, but the registration is temporarily

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invalid and the organization shall refrain from promoting their registration.

- 4.2.8 Suspension shall be revoked upon satisfactory closure of the concerns as communicated by AQA India.
- 4.2.9 Upon successful removal of the condition(s) causing AQA to suspend registration, AQA shall reinstate the registration and notify the organization. And suspended client's list will be updated accordingly.
- 4.2.10 If the registered organization is unable to satisfy the requirements for reinstatement, the registration shall be withdrawn or the Suspension extended.

4.3 **Withdrawal**

- 4.3.1 AQA reserves the right to withdraw a registered organization's registration for not revoking the suspension within stipulated time, as detailed in 4.2 above.
- 4.3.2 Client Relation Manager with the approval of Vice President shall communicate the decision of withdrawal to the client through e-mail/Fax/ or by Courier or by post.
- 4.3.3 Registered organizations notified by AQA of withdrawal, must immediately stop use of the logos and certification marks, and shall not promote the certification of registration.
- 4.3.4 AQA will request the return of the certificate of registration from the organization.
- 4.3.5 The list of withdrawn clients will be updated in www.aqa.in by the Vice President (ADMN) once in 30days.
- 4.3.6 If the client requires registering again with AQA India, the client shall apply afresh for registration.
- 4.3.7 An organization may request withdrawal or reducing the scope of certification of registration at any time.
- 4.3.8 AQA India shall document the voluntary withdrawal request from the client, and try to resolve any issues leading to withdrawal, before placing them under withdrawal list and withdraw publication of registration. AQA will request the return of the certificate of registration.

4.4 Client Relation Manager shall visit the website of the client or review of the correspondence received from the client to ensure that the Certification Marks and the Certificate are not misused by the client.

4.5 Review: The client relation manager in consultation with the Vice President will prepare potential list of the clients for conformance to this procedure once in a month and take necessary action in accordance with this procedure.

4.6 **Reduction of Scope:**

- 4.6.1 AQA India shall reduce the scope of certification of client, on following conditions:
 - a) To exclude the parts not meeting the requirements, during the assessment cycle. (initial stage 1, stage 2, surveillance and re-registration)
 - b) When the client has persistently or seriously failed to meet the certification requirement for those parts of the scope of certification.
 - c) Any such reduction shall be in-line with the requirements of the Management system standard used for the certification.



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- 4.6.2 During contract review, the designated person shall review the client's application and decide the applicability of the scope as requested by the client.
- 4.6.3 Upon documentation review, the document assessor shall confirm the scope applicability and any reduction of scope required.
 - 4.6.4 During any assessment audit, the audit team leader shall verify and confirm the scope of management system, if any part of the scope is not meeting the requirement, he shall recommend the AQA India office, for scope reduction.
 - 4.6.5 Upon receipt of recommendation from the audit team leader, AQA India Registration review committee shall review the audit reports and recommendations and take appropriate action either to reduce the scope or retain the scope of the management system.
 - 4.6.6 AQA India's designated authority will communicate the client, the decision of AQA India Registration review committee and amend the certificate if already issued, and reissue the certificate with reduced scope of management system.
 - 4.6.7 The register of certified clients and AQA India website www.aqa.in will be updated accordingly.

4.7 **General**

- 4.7.1 AQA will provide notification to the registered organization of probation, suspension, withdrawal, cancellation or reinstatement immediately by telephone, fax, and e-mail.
- 4.7.2 The registered organization shall be offered the opportunity to appeal any Suspension or withdrawal.
- 4.7.3 AQA abides by all sectors specific requirements regarding Suspension and withdrawal.
- 4.7.4 The Asst. Manger shall also update DRC for all suspensions, withdrawals and scope reduction upon consent of Vice President (ADMN)/Director.

5 **RECORDS**

- 5.1 Certificate of Management System Assessment (XXF-010)
- 5.2 Letter of Withdrawal, Probation or Cancellation – letter sent on case-to-case basis.
- 5.3 Certification agreement for management system registration disclosure (F-007)

6 **REVISIONS**

- 6.1 **R. 02: Amended as per ISO/IEC 17021:2011 – Dt 29/11/2013**
- 6.2 **R. 03: Amended as part of corrective action to the office audit Non-conformance by NABCB, dated 31/12/2013.**
- 6.3 **R. 04: Amended Sec. 4.2.2 as per the requirements of ISO 17021 – Clause 9.3.2.2. – Dt: 13.02.2014**

