

# Procedure for handling complaints and appeals

according to ISO 17025, ISO 17034 and ISO 17043

Complaints and appeals regarding HLNUG's services can be communicated to us in various ways, whether in writing or verbally, informally or via the customer feedback questionnaires. The responsible staff or management will appoint a lead person to take charge of further processing. This person first analyses the problem and causes and, if necessary, initiates additional checks or measures to correct or prevent errors. The results of the reviews and the effectiveness of the measures taken are then analysed and a final assessment of the complaint or appeal is made.

As the procedure for processing an objection is the same as that for an appeal, the further procedure is explained below on the basis of a complaint.

As a rule, no costs are incurred by customers for the processing of complaints. However, if it is foreseeable that the processing will involve considerable effort and costs, the assumption of costs will be agreed in advance with the complainant. In such cases, it is usually agreed that the complainant will bear the costs if the complaint proves to be unfounded. In the case of justified complaints, the department concerned bears the costs.

The final assessment of a complaint must be confirmed by at least one person who was not involved in the laboratory activities that led to the complaint. The outcome of the complaint is also confirmed by the staff responsible for the subject area and/or the head of the subject area, the responsible head of department and the responsible quality manager.

The receipt of a complaint is confirmed to the complainant as soon as possible. The final assessment is also sent to the complainant promptly after approval (confirmation of the result by all functions involved). In the event of longer processing periods, the complainant will be sent interim status reports in consultation with the staff responsible for the subject area or the head of the subject area.

In contrast to complaints in the sense of quality assurance, objections against administrative acts of HLNUG must be handled in accordance with administrative procedural law. The entire process takes place outside the accredited area and HLNUG's quality management system does not apply here. If such an objection also constitutes a complaint, this will be processed in parallel with the objection procedure, but separately.