



**BCSI**

Social  
Economic  
Environmental

**Benefit Corporation  
Standards Institute**

# Dispute Resolution Policy

Approved, 05032012

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## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To outline established policies and procedures for BCSI Dispute Resolution

## 2. Scope

- 2.1. Covers the BCSI Dispute Resolution process from complaint through resolution

## 3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. **Accredited Body Applicant (ABA)** – Applicant to BCSI's Accreditation program
- 3.2. **Accredited Body (AB)** – Firms that have been granted accredited status under BCSI program Certification Benefit Corporations
- 3.3. **Executive Director (ED)** – Chief Executive Officer of the corporation that reports directly to the Board

## 4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION

- 4.1. ISO 65 – 1996
- 4.2. Appeal Process – See BCSI Accreditation Manual

## 5. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

- 5.1. BCSI will address formal complaints that are brought to its attention.
- 5.2. If an individual or an organization expresses general dissatisfaction or makes a verbal complaint to BCSI personnel, that staff member shall first attempt to satisfy the complainant.
  - 5.2.1. If this is not possible, the complainant shall be invited to lodge a formal complaint addressed to the ED.
- 5.3. To be accepted and classified as a formal complaint, it shall:
  - 5.3.1. Be in writing.
  - 5.3.2. State that it is a complaint, and
  - 5.3.3. Be specific and include appropriate objective evidence to substantiate any claim.
- 5.4. Complaints based solely upon hearsay will not be accepted without further formalization.
- 5.5. A formal complaint should be:
  - 5.5.1. From an ABA regarding accreditation function or other activities, or.
  - 5.5.2. From interested parties or stakeholders regarding the performance of an accredited or applicant or AB, or
  - 5.5.3. From interested parties/stakeholders regarding the performance of a certified organization.

- 5.5.4. Appeals may only be made by an AB against an accreditation decision, and are covered separately by the BCSI Appeals Process.
- 5.6. Complaints shall be screened by BCSI personnel to ensure they meet the criteria indicated above.
  - 5.6.1. If they do not the complainant will be informed their complaint will not be accepted and the reasons why.
- 5.7. Accepted complaints shall be acknowledged in writing (email/letter) by the ED or BCSI Board Chair within 10 days of receipt.
- 5.8. Complaints received by BCSI are to be reviewed annually during Management Review.
- 5.9. A complaint against the ED shall be forwarded to the Chair of the BCSI Board.
- 5.10. Complaints against staff will be investigated and addressed according to internal procedures and any relevant legal requirements in order to protect the rights of the staff member.
- 5.11. The ED or the Board Chair shall allocate each complaint to an investigator who shall either be from amongst BCSI personnel, or if the complaint appears to warrant it, independent of BCSI, and the investigator:
  - 5.11.1. Shall be sent a copy of the complaint, with all correspondence
  - 5.11.2. Shall be independent of the complaint
  - 5.11.3. May contact the complainant and may obtain any additional information from other sources as necessary.
  - 5.11.4. Shall review all available information and make a decision on whether the complaint is justified, and report back to the ED or Board Chair, and the ED or Board Chair:
    - 5.11.4.1. Shall ensure appropriate measures are implemented to address the complaint, and
    - 5.11.4.2. Shall notify the complainant that the complaint has been addressed and may, providing that confidentiality is not breached, choose to explain how the complaint has been addressed and the issue resolved, and the actions that have been taken.
  - 5.11.5. When completed the complaint and other records created shall be filed in the Complaints File.
  - 5.11.6. For a complaint against staff member, a copy of the complaint, relevant correspondence and measures taken shall be filed in their Personnel File.
  - 5.11.7. Decision and measures taken to address a complaint cannot be appealed if the complainant is not satisfied with the measures taken.
- 5.12. Complaints against an ABA or AB shall be directed to them for resolution and will not be directly handled by BCSI; however, BCSI:
  - 5.12.1. Will request to be informed in a timely manner on all steps taken to address the complaint.

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- 5.12.2. Inform the complainant, that BCSI will not start to formally investigate the complaint unless BCSI has been informed by the complainant that the actions taken by the ABA or AB do not satisfactorily address and resolve the complaint.
  - 5.12.3. If, in the view of the complainant, the complaint has not been satisfactorily addressed and resolved by the ABA or AB, the complaint may be passed to the ED for follow-up, and:
    - 5.12.3.1. Are dealt with in the same way as complaints against BCSI.
    - 5.12.3.2. Depending on the seriousness of the issue raised a desk review or field assessment maybe required.
      - 5.12.3.2.1. If after investigation the complaint is found to be justified, and nonconformity has been detected, BCSI shall issue an appropriate Nonconformity (NC) and require appropriate corrective action.
    - 5.12.3.3. The corrective action implemented shall be recorded in the complaint log and in the relevant BSCI report if an assessment of the ABA or AB is performed.
    - 5.12.3.4. BCSI shall ensure that complainant is advised of the follow-up and actions taken.
  - 5.13. Complaints against a certified organizations shall be directed to the ABA or AB for resolution, and:
    - 5.13.1. They shall undertake the investigation of the complaint about the certified organization.
    - 5.13.2. If relevant, BCSI may request a response from the ABA or AB explaining the outcome of their investigation to ensure the complaint has been satisfactorily investigated and corrective action taken as appropriate.
    - 5.13.3. Complaints received by AB's and the way in which they were processed shall be reviewed during BCSI office assessments.