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|  AQC GROUP | AQC Group | No.          | PY08      |
|                                                                                             |           | Revision No. | 1         |
|                                                                                             |           | Date         | 23-8-2025 |
| NDIS Scheme Rules and Policy                                                                |           |              |           |

## 1.0 Certification Scheme

- 1.1 Applicants to the NDIS Scheme must comply with the following rules.
- 1.2 All information required by AQC Group to complete the assessment must be provided by the applicant.
- 1.3 AQC Group will operate the scheme in a transparent and fair manner, without prejudice or discrimination against any applicant based on size, type of business, financial position, or political background.
- 1.4 AQC Group is responsible for the full certification process and related activities, including the initial document review, audit/evaluation of the client's management system, periodic surveillance audits, and re-assessment audits/evaluations.
- 1.5 AQC Group will communicate the results of the initial audit/evaluation to the client. If all certification requirements are not met, AQC Group will inform the client of the areas of non-compliance.
- 1.6 When the client demonstrates that effective remedial actions have been taken within the specified timeframe, AQC Group will review the corrective measures and determine whether certification can be awarded.
- 1.7 All certified clients are encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions for improving these rules and regulations. AQC Group reserves the right to make minor changes or corrections without prior notice. However, clients will be notified in advance of any changes that affect their responsibilities or liabilities.
- 1.8 The client must clearly define responsibility for the certified system, for example, by appointing a designated representative to act as the primary contact with AQC Group and to ensure compliance with these provisions.
- 1.9 The client must allow accreditation representatives or trainee AQC Group auditors reasonable access to observe AQC Group auditors/evaluators performing initial audits/evaluations and/or surveillance activities.
- 1.10 AQC Group will conduct Initial audits/evaluations against the requirements of internationally accepted product certification schemes, management systems standards, applicable legislation and directives, and/or sector-specific scheme documentation.
- 1.11 Once an assessment has been completed and the systems are deemed satisfactory against the applicable standards, the Certification Manager will notify the applicant and issue a Recommendation of Certification to the NIDS Commission.
- 1.12 Surveillance (Midterm) audits shall be conducted as stipulated in the scheme, with additional visits at the discretion of AQC Group's Certification Managers.
- 1.13 The Certificate of Registration is valid for three years from the date of issue or recertification, subject to the client's continued compliance with certification requirements.
- 1.14 AQC Group may conduct short-notice audits of certified clients to investigate complaints, follow up on suspended clients, or respond to significant changes. In such cases, additional care will be taken in assigning the audit team.

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- 1.15 Certificates remain the property of AQC Group and must be returned upon request.
- 1.16 All clients must maintain a log of all customer complaints within the certified scope, along with records of corrective actions taken. These records shall be reviewed by AQC Group during audits.

## **2.0 Extending the Scope of Certification**

- 2.1 Clients wishing to extend the scope of certification to cover additional products, processes, services, or sites must apply in writing to AQC Group. The Scheme Manager will review the request and determine the necessary audits/evaluations.

## **3.0 Publicity by Certificate Holders**

- 3.1 A client has the right to publish that the product, process or service and company have been certified by AQC Group and apply the certification mark to promotional materials for which the certificate applies.
- 3.2 In every case, the client shall take sufficient care of its publications and advertising so that no confusion arises between management system certification and specific product certification, certificated and non-certificated business scopes covering product and/or services, which may mislead the market.
- 3.3 The client shall not make any claim that could mislead purchasers to believe that a product, process, service, site or organisation is covered by the certification when in fact it is not.

## **4.0 Confidentiality**

- 4.1 AQC Group shall ensure that its employees and contractors maintain confidentiality regarding all sensitive information obtained in connection with client activities.
- 4.2 Clients must also maintain confidentiality regarding all commercial terms and conditions agreed with AQC Group.
- 4.3 Information relating to a client or individual will not be disclosed to third parties without written consent, unless required by law. Where disclosure is legally required, the client or individual will, unless prohibited, be notified in advance.
- 4.4 When confidential information is provided to oversight bodies (e.g., accreditation bodies, agreement groups, or peer assessment schemes), confidentiality will be protected during their access.

## **5.0 Misuse of Certificate**

- 5.1 AQC Group will take reasonable measures to control the use of its certificates.
- 5.2 Incorrect or misleading references to certification in advertisements, catalogues, or other materials will result in corrective or legal action, including publicising the misuse if necessary.

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5.3 Clients are encouraged to report suspected misuse of AQC Group marks to the Scheme Manager. Reports will be treated confidentially.

## 6.0 Suspension of Certification

6.1 A Certificate may be suspended for a limited period (normally not exceeding six months) in the following cases:

- 6.1.1 Regular surveillance or recertification audits identify non-compliance that does not warrant immediate withdrawal,
- 6.1.2 Improper use of the certificate (e.g., misleading advertising) is not corrected,
- 6.1.3 The client voluntarily requests suspension,
- 6.1.4 Violation of certification rules and regulations,
- 6.1.5 Failure to implement corrective action requests (CARs) within specified timeframes,
- 6.1.6 Surveillance or re-audit is delayed by more than two months.

6.2 During suspension, the client must not claim certification for any affected product, process, service, or organisation.

6.3 Suspension decisions will be formally confirmed in writing by the Scheme Manager, including conditions for reinstatement.

6.4 At the end of the suspension period, an investigation will verify whether conditions for reinstatement have been met. If so, certification will be reinstated. If not, the certificate will be withdrawn.

6.5 All costs incurred for suspension and reinstatement will be charged to the client.

## 7.0 Corrective Actions

7.1 When certificate misuse is reported, AQC Group will investigate. If misuse is substantiated, investigation costs will be borne by the certificate holder.

7.2 AQC Group will determine the scope of misuse and appropriate corrective measures.

## 8.0 Complaints Handling Process

8.1 Clients may lodge complaints regarding the conduct of AQC Group staff in writing to the relevant Scheme Manager. Complaints against the Scheme Manager should be directed to the director of AQC Group.

8.2 Complaints received from external stakeholders about certified clients will be referred to the client at an appropriate time. Complaints are logged, evaluated for validity, and corrective or preventive action taken as necessary.

8.3 All complaints are handled confidentially. AQC Group, together with the client and

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complainant, will determine whether the complaint and resolution will be made public.

## 9.0 Appeals Process

- 9.1 Clients may appeal against notifications of suspension, scope reduction, or withdrawal of certification.
- 9.2 Appeals must be submitted in writing to the relevant Scheme Manager within 14 days of notification.
- 9.3 Suspended certification status will be made publicly accessible.
- 9.4 Clients may object to the involvement of specific AQC Group management members in the appeal process if impartiality is compromised. Appellants may present their case in person at their own expense.
- 9.5 Appeals are reviewed by the Supervisory Board. Its decision is final and binding, with no counterclaims permitted. Decisions will be issued within four months of receipt.
- 9.6 Where an appeal is upheld and certification reinstated, reimbursement of costs may be granted at AQC Group's discretion.
- 9.7 Appeals will not result in discriminatory action against the appellant.
- 9.8 If a complainant is dissatisfied with AQC Group's complaints process, they may refer the matter directly to JASANZ.

## 10.0 Fees

- 10.1 AQC Group shall set fees at levels determined from time to time, based on operating costs, administration, and the long-term development of certification services.
- 10.2 Commercial arrangements are detailed in service contracts or other agreements between AQC Group and clients.

## 11.0 Notice of Changes

- 11.1 Clients must notify AQC Group promptly of any matters that may affect the ability of their management system to meet certification requirements, including:
  - 11.1.1 Legal, commercial, organisational, or ownership changes (including key staff),
  - 11.1.2 Changes to the contact address or sites,
  - 11.1.3 Changes in the size or scope of business under the certified management system,
  - 11.1.4 Significant changes to management systems or processes.
- 11.2 AQC Group auditors must also be informed of changes made since the previous audit.

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11.3 AQC Group will provide clients with due notice of any changes to certification requirements.

## **12.0 Witnessed Audits and Unannounced Visits**

12.1 During certification or surveillance audits, JASANZ assessors may witness the audit process. Their role will be limited to observation only; they will not participate in audit activities.

12.2 During the certification cycle, AQC Group may, at its discretion, conduct unannounced visits to client premises, accompanied by JASANZ assessors if required, to verify compliance.

## **13.0 AQC Group's Finances**

13.1 AQC Group's primary source of income is derived from Quality Management System auditing programs, including the NDIS Scheme.

13.2 AQC Group is currently in a sound financial position. However, in the event of unforeseen circumstances, the shareholders are committed to providing additional financial support to the Company, should it be required.

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