

## INQAAHE

### Protocol for Handling Complaints Concerning Members

This protocol defines the internal procedure to be followed by INQAAHE upon receiving credible complaints regarding the conduct, integrity, or compliance of a Full, Associate, or Affiliate Member. It aims to ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency in decision-making, in line with INQAAHE's Constitution and values.

INQAAHE is an inclusive learning community. Membership is based on shared values, professional interests, and a commitment to quality assurance practices, rather than on external evaluation or accreditation. The Network's purpose is to provide members with opportunities to learn from one another, to consider alternative approaches, and to develop viable solutions within their respective contexts. Membership does not require compliance with ISG standards.

Our commitment to inclusiveness applies only to bona fide organizations and does not extend to entities acting in bad faith (e.g., degree mills, accreditation mills) or organizations that misrepresent their identity, purpose, or status.

This complaint process only accepts complaints that relate directly to alleged breaches of the Network's membership criteria. Complaints about ISG outcomes or ISG non-compliance are outside the scope of this protocol.

#### 1. Guiding Principles

All complaints will be handled according to the following principles:

- **Fairness and due process.** Both parties shall be heard and allowed to present evidence.
- **Transparency.** Only complaints from identifiable complainants will be addressed.
- **Confidentiality.** Information will be shared only with those directly involved. The identity of the complainant will be protected and will not be disclosed without their explicit consent.
- **Evidence-based assessment.** All conclusions must rely on verifiable and relevant data.
- **Accountability.** All decisions will be documented and communicated formally.
- **Non-Mediation and Neutrality Principle.** INQAAHE will not assume the role of mediator in resolving conflicts or disputes that may arise between members and other entities, or vice versa.

#### 2. Complaint Submission

Complaints must be submitted in writing to the INQAAHE Secretariat through official communication channels. They must include:

- The complainant's identity and contact details.

- A clear description of the issue.
- Relevant evidence supporting the complaint provided in English.
- A statement whether the issue has been taken up with the organization concerned, if so with what results and, if not, for what reason.
- Information on any current or past relationship of the complainant with the organization concerned.

### 3. Review Process

#### 1) Receipt of the complaint

Upon receipt, the INQAAHE Secretariat will acknowledge the complaint and inform the Chair of the Membership & Communication Committee. Within ten (10) working days, the Chair will prepare an initial summary of the case.

#### 2) Request for clarification/additional information (to the complainant)

If the Committee deems it necessary, the INQAAHE Secretariat may request further documentation or clarifications from the complainant. This step is administrative only and does not involve any determination on the merits.

#### 3) Analysis of supplementary information

The Committee analyses the additional material. Based on this analysis, the Committee determines whether there is a need to seek a response from the member concerned.

#### 4) Contact with the member organization

If the Committee so decides, the Chair of the Committee shall contact the member organization concerned, outline the relevant elements of the complaint that fall within scope, and request a written response. Both the complainant and the Member concerned shall be given a similar timeframe to respond in writing, normally within two weeks. The Committee may consult relevant authorities or experts when appropriate.

#### 5) Committee recommendation

The Committee reviews the response received and adopts a recommendation to the Board regarding the status of the member, which may be:

- a) Rejecting the complaint if there is not enough evidence.
- b) Monitoring.
- c) Temporarily suspending the member's status pending resolution.
- d) Withdrawing the membership, in accordance with Article 20 of the Constitution<sup>1</sup>.

#### 6) Board decision

The Board takes the final decision on the status of the member, taking into account the recommendation of the Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Art. 20. Membership in or affiliation with the Network may be withdrawn by a majority vote of the Board of Directors if the Member or Affiliate: 20.1 fails to maintain the conditions that allowed its initial admission, as set out in this Constitution; or 20.2 does not fulfil the obligations set out in the Constitution; or 20.3 acts in the Network's name without authorisation; or 20.4 misrepresents its association with the Network as implying any level of recognition (beyond the criteria that allowed its admission to the Network); 20.5 proves to have been engaged in illegal operations or misconduct leading to loss of trust in their provisions of quality assurance.

#### **4. Disclaimer**

If INQAAHE receives credible complaints or becomes aware of information raising concerns about a member's integrity or transparency, it may request relevant explanations and supporting documentation. If the response is deemed unsatisfactory, INQAAHE reserves the right, at its sole discretion and in alignment with its values, to revoke the organization's eligibility without further obligation or liability.

#### **5. Constitutional Reference (Article 20)**

Membership in INQAAHE (Full, Associate, or Affiliate) may be withdrawn by a majority vote of the Board of Directors if the member:

- Fails to maintain the conditions that allowed its initial admission.
- Does not fulfil the obligations set out in the Constitution.
- Acts in the Network's name without authorization.
- Misrepresents its association with INQAAHE as implying any level of recognition beyond its admission criteria.
- Is engaged in illegal operations or misconduct leading to loss of trust.

#### **6. Record Keeping**

All documentation, correspondence, and decisions related to the complaint will be securely stored by the INQAAHE Secretariat for accountability, institutional memory, and future reference.