

# Impartiality Committee: Terms of Reference

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to outline the terms of reference for the impartiality committee. The impartiality committee is responsible for ensuring impartiality in decision-making and actions of the certification body, and for investigating and resolving complaints related to impartiality.

## **Scope**

The impartiality committee's scope includes all aspects of the organisation's operations and decision-making processes that could potentially compromise impartiality. This includes certification decisions. The committee will review and investigate complaints related to impartiality and provide recommendations for addressing them.

## **Membership**

The impartiality committee consists of individuals who have an in-depth understanding of the certification industry and the organisation's operations.

Members of the impartiality committee must commit to upholding impartiality in all aspects of the organisation's work.

Committee members should have the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience to carry out the committee's responsibilities effectively.

## **Responsibilities:**

The impartiality committee's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Developing and implementing policies and procedures related to impartiality, in consultation with relevant interested parties.
2. Monitoring and assessing the organisation's decision-making processes to ensure impartiality is always maintained.
3. Investigating complaints related to impartiality and determining appropriate courses of action.
4. Making recommendations to address risks and issues related to impartiality and ensuring appropriate follow-up actions are taken.
5. Reporting to senior management and/or the board of directors on the status of impartiality within the organisation and any issues or concerns that arise.

6. Ensuring that all employees and other interested parties are aware of the organisation's impartiality policies and procedures, and their roles and responsibilities in upholding impartiality.

## **Authority**

The impartiality committee has the authority to:

1. Access all relevant information necessary to carry out its responsibilities.
2. Consult with internal and external experts as required.
3. Make recommendations to senior management and/or the board of directors regarding issues related to impartiality.
4. Take appropriate action to address issues related to impartiality, including recommending disciplinary action where necessary.

No director or shareholder will have a vote on the impartiality committee.

## **Meetings**

The impartiality committee will meet on a regular basis to review and assess the organisation's decision-making processes, investigate complaints related to impartiality, monitor impartiality risks/issues and make recommendations as required. The committee should keep detailed records of its meetings and activities and report regularly to senior management and/or the board of directors.

## **Confidentiality**

The impartiality committee are required to maintain strict confidentiality regarding all matters discussed and investigated. Committee members should not discuss committee matters with anyone outside the committee unless authorised to do so by the committee chair or senior management.

## **Quorum**

A quorum is necessary to ensure that decisions made by the committee are legitimate and represent the consensus of its members.

A **minimum three members** of the impartiality committee will form a quorum.

## **Conflict of Interest**

Committee members must declare any conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest that may arise. In case of conflict of interest, the committee member should

recuse themselves from any discussion, investigation, or decision-making related to the matter in question.

## **Complaints**

Complaints related to impartiality should be submitted to the impartiality committee in writing. The committee should acknowledge receipt of the complaint and provide information on the next steps and the expected timeline for resolution. The committee should ensure that all complaints are handled in a fair, impartial, and timely manner.

## **Reporting**

The impartiality committee will report to senior management and/or the board of directors on the status of impartiality within the organisation, the number and nature of complaints received, and the actions taken to address them.

The committee's reports will be presented on a regular basis, or as required by senior management or the board of directors.

## **Resources**

Senior management and the board of directors will provide the impartiality committee access to adequate resources to carry out its responsibilities effectively. These resources may include funding, personnel, information systems, and support services as required.

## **Enforcement**

The impartiality committee will ensure that impartiality policies and procedures are enforced consistently throughout the organisation. The committee should work closely with the departments and functions within the organisation to ensure that all employees and stakeholders are aware of their roles and responsibilities in upholding impartiality.

## **Communication**

The impartiality committee should maintain effective communication channels with all relevant interested parties, including senior management, the board of directors, employees, and external parties. The committee should ensure that all interested parties are aware of its activities, decisions, and recommendations related to impartiality.

## **Independence**

The impartiality committee operates independently and without any undue influence or pressure from senior management or other stakeholders. The committee should ensure that its decisions and recommendations are based solely on the facts and evidence presented to it.

### **Review, Amendments and Continuous Improvement**

These terms of reference will be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain relevant and effective in achieving the impartiality committee's objectives.

The impartiality committee will regularly review its activities and processes to identify areas for improvement.

The committee should make recommendations for improvements and take appropriate actions to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency.

Any amendments should be communicated to all relevant interested parties, and the committee should ensure that these amendments are implemented effectively.