	CREATION DATE February 15, 2012	DATE REVISED July 26, 2024
	POLICY AREA / CATEGORY	DATE APPROVED / EFFECTIVE DATE March 1, 2012
POLICY TITLE APPEALS	VERSION	DATE REVIEWED July 26, 2024

SUMMARY & PURPOSE:

This policy shall describe the key components and processes that are to be followed for any appeal that occurs.

DEFINITIONS:

Appellant: the individual filing the appeal. The individual must file their own appeal and can be at any stage of the certification process (applicant, candidate, certificant).

Appeal: a formal request by an applicant, candidate, or certificant to a higher authority to reevaluate and potentially overturn a decision made by a certification body.

POLICY:

Individuals at any stage of the certification process shall be allowed to file an appeal following the process as described in this policy. An appeal will be considered in the following circumstances where the individual does not achieve or maintain certification:

- determination of ineligibility for certification
- adverse testing conditions severe enough to cause a major disruption of the examination process
- revocation decision (e.g. ethical or legal misconduct)
- determination of ineligibility for renewal or recertification
- determination of non-renewal
- other outcomes from a disciplinary action impacting the Appellant

Submitted appeals shall not be considered for the following:

- review of individual examination items
- review of examination forms

The Appellant shall state the specific grounds why the appeal should be considered or granted. The appeal may not present, include, or rely on facts that were not previously presented in the proceedings that led to the decision being appealed. Appeals are limited to:

- The fact that the Certification Council's decision was not supported by or was contradicted by the evidence presented
- The fact that the Certification Council did not follow its own policies and procedures
- That the disciplinary action is not appropriate to the gravity of the situation

Certification Status during the Appeals Process

- During the period that appeals considerations are in progress, Appellants will be continued based on the individual's standing with the certification program, subject to the normal and regular cycle of renewal requirements.


SCOPE/APPLICABILITY:

The policy shall apply to all individuals who are engaged in the certification process at any stage and shall be applied fairly in all circumstances as described above.

PROCEDURES TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE:

Initial Appeal:

1. The Appellant must submit an appeal in writing to the Director of Certification within thirty (30) days of receipt of notification of an adverse decision (email notification is sufficient). The appeal must include:
 - a. Specific decision or situation that is being appealed
 - b. Documentation to support the appeal request (additional information may be requested by the Director for clarification)
 - c. Certification involved

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- d. Appellant's professional background and other characteristics that will assist in the selection of a panel of peers.
2. The Director of Certification shall notify the Appellant of the receipt of the appeal with ten (10) business days.
3. The Certification Council Chair and Vice Chair, in coordination with the Director of Certification, shall appoint an Appeals Panel. The Appeals Panel shall:
 - a. Be composed of three individuals, at least one of whom is an SSH member in good standing:
 - i. one who holds the specific certification
 - ii. one representing the Appellant's professional background
 - iii. one independent reviewer
 - b. appoint one member of the Appeal Panel as the Chair.
 - c. Ensure there are no irreconcilable conflicts of interest (e.g. intimate knowledge of, business relationship with, or shared projects with Appellant).
 - d. Ensure Appeals Panel members were not involved in item writing or form development of the appropriate certification.
 - e. ensure consideration to characteristics of the Appellant such as culture, geography.
4. The Appeals Panel shall then meet by teleconference within 30 days of receipt of the appeal. All determinations regarding appeals must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Appeals Panels.
5. Notice of the Appeals Panel determination shall be provided to the Appellant by the Director of Certification within 10 business days of the decision. (certified mail to individual with return receipt)
6. The Appellant then has 30 days from receipt of the Appeals Panels determination to file a written appeal with the Certification Council if desired (secondary appeal).

Secondary Appeal:


1. The applicant, candidate, or certificant who wishes to make a secondary appeal after receiving the results of the initial appeal must submit an appeal in writing to the Director of Certification within thirty (30) days of receipt of notification of the initial appeal. (email notification sufficient)
 - o The Appellant shall include a response regarding the basis for the secondary appeal.
2. The Director of Certification shall notify the Appellant of the receipt of the secondary appeal with ten (10) business days.
3. The Director of Certification shall notify the Certification Council of the secondary appeal, and all information from the primary appeal and the secondary appeal shall be forwarded to the Certification Council.
4. The full SSH Accreditation Council shall act as the Secondary Appeals Panel.
 - o The Chair of the SSH Accreditation Council will chair the Secondary Appeals Process.
 - o The Certification Council Chair and Vice Chair may participate in the discussions but shall not be allowed to vote.
5. The Secondary Appeals Panel may contact the individual via the Director of Certification to request additional information or clarification.
6. The Secondary Appeals Panel will reply to the appeal in writing within 6 weeks unless otherwise communicated by the Director of Certification. The written response shall be submitted to the Director of Certification who shall then forward it to the individual.

SSH Certification Staff shall coordinate the appeals process and record all pertinent information.

SUPPORTING/REFERENCE DOCUMENTATION:

- None

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES AND ASSOCIATED FORMS:

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- Complaints Policy

ASSOCIATED NCCA STANDARD(S):

- 7F

POSTED PUBLICLY: YES