P26 Certification Changes Procedure

1.   Purpose

The purpose of this document is to describe the procedure for changing, terminating, suspending, or withdrawing certification.

2.   Scope

This procedure covers the overall activity for changing, terminating, suspending or withdrawing a standard(s) or scheme certification of a client as defined in the *Quality Innovation Performance Certifications Pty Ltd* (QIP Certifications) M01 Quality Manual.

3.   Referenced Documents

ISO 17021-1:2015	Conformity Assessment – requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems. Sec. 9.6.5.
ISO 17065:2015	Conformity Assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services. Sec. 7.10, 7.11.
JAS-ANZ	HSQF Scheme (HS Scheme Part 2) – Additional requirements for bodies certifying Human Services in Queensland – Sec. 7.11, 7.13.
M01	Quality Manual
PY02	Confidentiality Policy
PY05	Privacy Policy
PY08	Risk Policy
PY10	Complaints and Appeals Policy
P01	Document Control Procedure
P02	Records Management Procedure
P07	Appeals Management Procedure
P09	Audit Planning Procedure
P11	Risk Assessment
P13	Outsourcing
P14	Rules for Logo and Certification Mark
P24	Notifiable Issues Procedure (HSQF)
P25	Complaints Management Procedure
F37	Audit Report Review Checklist
Survey Monkey	Customer Satisfaction Survey
F41	Approved Organisations Register
F48	Certificate Template

Table 1–Referenced Documents

4.   Workplace Health & Safety

No identified workplace health and safety issues have been identified.

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5.   Terms and Definitions

ATL	Audit Team Leader
Department	Department of Communities–HSQF team
EM	Executive Manager
QIP Certifications	*Quality Innovation Performance Certifications Pty Ltd*
QMR	Quality Management Representative
QMS	Quality Management System
Suitable Person	An internal person (not directly engaged with the audit client) with the requisite skills, knowledge and experience in change management processes.
TR	Technical Reviewer

Table 2-Terms and Definitions

6.   Responsibilities

6.1. Executive Manager

The Executive Manager (EM) is responsible for:

- Maintaining, extending, or reducing the scope of certification;
- Any other change(s), termination, suspension or withdrawal of audit client certification;
- Signing amended certificates;
- Updating the registrar of certified clients.

6.2. The Quality Management Representative

The Quality Management Representative (QMR) is responsible for:

- Review of client certification status;
- Notification of certification change(s), termination, suspension or withdrawal to audit clients;
- Management of all Client Certification documentation under the records Management and Document Control procedures.

In the absence of the EM the QMR will be responsible for:

- Maintaining, extending, or reducing the scope of product, process and services certifications;
- Any other change(s), termination, suspension or withdrawal of audit client certification;
- Signing amended certificates;
- Updating the registrar of certified clients.

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7.   Certification Changes

7.1.   Change Process

From time to time certification scheme owners may introduce new or revised requirements that could affect the audit client or QIP Certifications. These certification changes can include new information related to the fulfilment of current certification requirements obtained by QIP Certifications after certification has been established.

When the change has been initiated by the Scheme owners:

- The QMR will monitor all changes through attendance at all relevant networks, access to applicable professional development opportunities and access to relevant professional periodicals and online portals;
- When and as scheme changes occur, the QMR will:
  - Verify the change notifications with the scheme owner(s);
  - Confer with the EM on the nature of the changes to current certification;
  - Make changes to QIP Certification policy and procedures as agreed with the EM;
  - Make changes to contractual and certification documentation as required;
  - Develop a formal communication of the changes to all clients in plain English formats for electronic distribution;
  - Formally notify client of changes either through electronic format(email) or by contacting them via phone;
  - Update communication of changes to clients file.

When the change has been initiated by the audit client:

- The audit client may, at any time in the certification cycle, request a change to their certification;
- Possible requests for certification changes may be due to:
  - Change in ownership;
  - Change in name of the company;
  - Withdrawal from the scheme related industry;
  - Closure of the business;
  - Increase or decrease in scope (service types offered etc.); or
  - Increase or decrease in locations (opening/closing of sites, new Head Office etc.).
- Where the audit client has initiated certification changes the EM will consider the request through a formal change management process and decide on the appropriate actions to be taken.

7.1.1.   Management of Change

Implementation of the changes affecting certifications will include evaluation and review of the changes, whether by the scheme owner or the audit client, will commence with the EM assigning a suitable person to evaluate the change, create an evaluation plan, implement the evaluation plan and make recommendations on the impacts to either audit clients certification status or to QIP Certifications systems, processes and documentation.

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Where the certification change is made by the scheme owner:

- If the scheme changes(s) trigger a new situation where a certification client may now face a possible Non-Conformity (NC) the QMR will notify the EM within 1 working day;
- The EM and QMR will immediately review the evaluation recommendations and decide on the next steps to maintain accreditation and to ensure that the audit clients maintain their certification;
- The QMR will complete a short desktop review of all audit clients under contract and detail all possible affected certifications for the EM within 2 working days;
- The EM will then contact the audit client(s) in writing within 1 working day;
- The QMR will contact the clients directly to discuss impacts and develop solutions with all affected clients (solutions could include desktop audit reviews, site visits or special audits);
- The QMR will ensure that the implementation of these changes is verified as above.

Where the certification change is requested by the audit client:

- The EM will appoint a suitable person to evaluate the request, complete an evaluation plan, implement the plan and make recommendations on the appropriateness or not of the requested changes;
- The EM and QMR will complete a review of the evaluation findings within 2 working days;
- The EM will then contact the audit client(s) in writing within 1 working day;
- The QMR will contact the clients directly to discuss impacts and develop solutions with all affected clients (solutions could include desktop audit reviews, site visits or special audits);

All agreed changes will be documented in the clients file by the QMR with all evaluation and review s documented and uploaded to the secure audit client file.

The EM will approve and release the:

- Issue of revised formal certification documentation to extend or reduce scope;
- Issue of revised formal certification documentation of any revised surveillance or special audit activities.

Where and as required, the audit client and EM or QMR will notify the department of the findings and agreed actions to address the outcomes of any audit client certification change evaluation and review process.

Records kept of the change process in each instance will contain any rationale formulated that may exclude any of the above activities (I.e. when notification of a certification change that is not a product requirement is received, and no evaluation, review or decision activities are necessary by the EM and/or QMR).

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7.2. Termination, Suspension or Withdrawal of Certification

From time to time, as a result of a surveillance audit or otherwise (e.g. scheme owner directive, Notifiable Issues for HSQF), NC's with certification requirements can arise for a client.

In the first instance QIP Certifications will:

- Formally examine the situation surrounding the client NC using the process requirements of this procedure;
- Assess risk and other impacts of the NC through this evaluation and review;
- Devise appropriate action that considers the risk impact of the NC on the clients' standard or scheme compliance and its' stakeholders;
- Appropriate action will include:
  o Continuation of certification under conditions specified by QIP Certifications (e.g. a new Correctional Action Plan with follow up visits; increased surveillance etc.);
  o A reduction in scope of the certification to remove the non-conforming situation from the certification;
  o Suspension of the certification pending immediate remedial action by the audit client;
  o Withdrawal of the certification.

7.2.1. Certification Suspension

QIP Certifications shall suspend a organisations certification for the following reasons:

- The client's certified management system has persistently or seriously failed to meet certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the management system;
- The certified client does not allow surveillance or recertification audits to be conducted at the required frequencies;
- The certified client has voluntarily requested a suspension.

Under this suspension, the organisations quality management system certification will be temporarily invalid.

7.2.2. Nonconformities

- When a client has been issued with a Major-Nonconformity (MNC) and this has been reviewed and downgraded to an NC, the client has a remaining 9 months to close out the Nonconformance. Failure to do so will result in automatic suspension of certification.

7.2.3. Post Suspension and Withdrawal Review

QIP Certifications, when deciding to suspend or withdraw client certification will follow the actions required of the relevant Standard(s) or scheme.

In each case the QMR will:

- Provide the client with a detailed report outlining what corrective actions are needed to end suspension and restore certification according to the Standard or scheme, as well as any other actions that may need to be completed as required by the scheme or the scheme owner;
- Maintain communication with the scheme owner regularly during any suspension process to maintain transparency and accountability;

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For HSQF certified clients, where the client has temporarily lost all persons accessing their services or a specific service type, and may not meet all the requirements of the scheme at the next round of the cycle, QIP Certifications will allow the client to voluntarily reduce the scope or suspend certification while not in receipt of departmental funding and/or without persons accessing its' services.

When and if certification becomes suspended, QIP Certifications will conduct such activities with the client to ensure that the client has met full conformity within six (6) months of the decision to suspend or certification will then need to be withdrawn.

In these cases:

- The QMR will work with the client to manage this process according to the process outlined in this procedure;
- Where special or increased surveillance audits are required to meet the timeframe stated and prevent certification withdrawal, the EM and QMR will ensure that this is managed in a cost-effective way for both the client and QIP Certifications;
- The QMR will maintain documentation throughout the remedial action process to reflect each action taken and completed in accordance with the Records Management and Control of Documents procedures.

7.2.4. Modification Required to Certification Documentation

QIP Certification will follow all necessary actions to maintain the currency of all certification documentation and information in any case of reduction, suspension or withdrawal of a clients' certification. QIP Certifications will ensure that no indication of Standard or scheme certification remains in a case of suspension or withdrawal. The QMR will be responsible for management of this process.

This may include:

- Modification of all formal certification documents (e.g. re-issue of certificates);
- Updating publicly available certification information (i.e. website listings);
- Communication of the process activities and outcomes with the client and scheme owner as required;
- Changes to authorisations for the use of logos and marks;
- Reporting all actions to the EM weekly.

7.2.5. Reinstatement of Certification

QIP Certifications will make all necessary modifications to certification documentation and information once a client has completed all necessary planned actions and provided verifiable evidence to meet certification compliance requirements within the required timeframe (6 months) which may include a decision to reduce the scope of certification.

This includes:

- Modification of all formal certification documents (e.g. re-issue of certificates);
- Updating publicly available certification information (i.e. website listings);
- Communication of the process activities and outcomes with the client and scheme owner as required;
- Changes to authorisations for the use of logos and marks;

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- Reporting all actions and outcomes to the EM weekly.

7.2.6. Management of Scope Reductions

QIP Certification will follow all necessary actions to maintain the currency of all certification documentation and information in any case of scope reduction. The QMR will be responsible for the management of this which may include:

- Actions as specifically outlined in the scheme requirements (e.g. HSQF);
- Subsequent changes to all formal certification documentation (i.e. re-issue of certificates);
- Update all publicly available information (e.g. website listings);
- Communication of the process activities and outcomes with the client and scheme owner as required;
- Changes to authorisations for the use of logos and marks;
- Reporting all actions and outcomes to the EM weekly.

7.2.7. Client Requested Termination of certification

From time to time a client may request termination of certification. QIP Certification will follow all necessary actions to maintain the currency of all certification documentation and information in any case of voluntary termination of a clients' certification. QIP Certifications will ensure that no indication of Standard or scheme certification remains in a case of voluntary termination. The QMR will be responsible for management of this process.

This may include:

- Actions as specifically outlined in the scheme requirements (e.g. HSQF);
- Subsequent changes to all formal certification documentation (i.e. certificates);
- Update all publicly available information (e.g. website listings);
- Communication of the process activities and outcomes with the client and scheme owner as required;
- Changes to authorisations for the use of logos and marks;
- Reporting all actions and outcomes to the EM weekly.

8. Records

The QMR is responsible for the retention, maintenance and security management of all certification records to demonstrate that all certification process requirements for all accredited Standards and schemes have been effectively fulfilled.

- The QMR will follow all process as outlined in the Records Management and Control of Documents procedures;
- The QMR will maintain and monitor the confidentiality of all certifications records and liaise with the AGPAL ICT Group in the secure and authorised management and retention of all certification records;
- Where the Standard or scheme includes a complete re-evaluation (audit) within a pre-determined cycle (e.g. HSQF) all client records will be retained for the previous and present cycle;
- QIP Certification will maintain the records of each audit client for a minimum period of three full certification cycles, unless deemed otherwise by the company or the Standard(s)/scheme owner.

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8.1.1. Records for HSQF Clients:

The QMR will work with the audit client to gain the consent of the participants or persons accessing the client services (or their authorised representative) to access their files in the case of a corrective action process to reinstate a client certification. This will be according to the Privacy policy, the Confidentiality policy, the Complaints and Appeals policy and the Audit Planning procedure.

Where it is not practical or possible to gain formal consent, the client will manage the access to all necessary participant or persons files in a manner that is in accordance with all applicable legislation (e.g. de-identified and edited file content.

9. Complaints and Appeals

9.1. Management process

QIP Certifications will manage all certification complaints and appeals in accordance with the Complaints Management and Appeals Management policy and procedures. The EM will monitor all complaints and appeals actions and outcomes as outlined in QIP Certification policy and procedure through a scheduled update process.

9.1.1. HSQF Complaints and Appeals

QIP Certifications will communicate all certification complaints and appeals to the Department as a result of an audit or certification decision. All audit and certification decision complaints and appeals will be managed in accordance with the Complaints Management and Appeals Management policy and procedures. The QMR will also:

- Contact the Department within 48 hours of the lodgement of any complaint or appeal;
- Update the department with complaints and appeals progress reports in a timeframe that is mutually agreed with the client, QIP Certifications and the Department;
- Ensure that all documentation of audit and certification decisions complaints and appeals processes are maintained in accordance with relevant regulation and legalisation, scheme rules and QIP Certifications policy and procedure.

10. Revision History

Revision	Effective Date	Section	Change Description
1	15/01/2019	All	Initial Release
2	7/08/2019	All	Additional wording added in response to JAS-ANZ Document review

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