

EQUASS Complaints procedure – updated January 2012



Types of eligible complaints

NR	Type of complaint
1	Complaint about performance of the auditor
2	Complaint about performance of the Local License Holder
3	Complaint about the performance of the EQUASS Unit
4	Complaint about the audit process / procedure / documents
5	Third parties dispute that a service provider deserves EQUASS certification

Note: Disagreement with non-certification is not an eligible complaint, but should be subject to an 'Appeal Procedure (make link to appeal procedure)

Description of the EQUASS Actors:

Applicant:	Organisation that applies for EQUASS Certification
EQUASS Unit: Central EQUASS Team in Brussels composed of:	EQUASS Coordinator – equass@equass.be EQUASS Key Expert - equass@xs4all.nl EQUASS Manager – jan.spooren@epr.eu
Local Licence Holder (LLH)	National organisation entrusted with the responsibility to operate the EQUASS assurance audit process and to distribute EQUASS Assurance in a given country.
Auditor	Qualified person trained in checking whether organisations comply with the EQUASS requirements. Auditors are appointed by the EQUASS Awarding Committee
EQUASS Awarding Committee	Committee of various European sectorial stakeholders representing: service users, service providers, social partners, funders and policy makers. The EQUASS Awarding Committee approves the requirements, procedures and the awarding criteria of the EQUASS certification programs.

Note: Disagreement with non-certification is not an eligible complaint. This should be expressed in an appeal. The appeal procedure is different.

Types of eligible complaints	Who ¹ can complain	Term / deadline	Complain to whom?	Response time	Type of Response
1 - Complaint about performance of the auditor	The director of the applicant or the person that signed the application	30 days after letter with feedback on audit	To the EQUASS Manager or LLH who will transmit to the EQUASS Manager	Confirmation of receipt within 10 days. Full response within 30 days of confirmation of receipt.	Result of the investigation of the EQUASS Manager, in consultation with the Auditor and the Awarding Committee. The perspectives and explanations of both the auditor and the applicant will be synthesized for the decision of the Awarding Committee. A letter will be sent to the applicant, and the auditor, explaining which issues are legitimate, which are not, and what concrete actions have been taken following to the complaint.
2 - Complaint about performance of the Local License Holder	The director of the applicant or the person that signed the application	No deadline	To the EQUASS Manager	Confirmation of receipt within 10 days Full response within 30 days of confirmation of receipt.	Result of the investigation of the EQUASS Manager. A response will be issued explaining which issues were justified, which were not, explaining which concrete actions have been taken following to the complaint. The outcome of the complaint is notified to the Awarding Committee.

¹ Complaints can be formulated in English or in the local language. Answers from the EQUASS Unit will be formulated in English

Types of eligible complaints	Who¹ can complain	Term / deadline	Complain to whom?	Response time	Type of Response
3 - Complaint about the performance of the EQUASS Unit	The director of the applicant or the person that signed the application	No deadline	To the EQUASS Manager or LLH who will transmit to the EQUASS Manager	Confirmation of receipt within 10 days Full response within 30 days of confirmation of receipt.	Result of the investigation of the EQUASS Manager. Response explaining which issues were justified; which were not; explaining which concrete actions have been taken following to the complaint.
4 - Complaint about non respect of the audit process / procedure	The director of the applicant or the person that signed the application	30 days after letter with feedback on audit	To the EQUASS Manager or LLH who will transmit to the EQUASS Manager	Confirmation of receipt within 10 days Full response within 30 days of confirmation of receipt.	Result of the investigation of the EQUASS Manager. In case the complaint is linked to a non-certification and is justified, a re-audit shall be organised by the EQUASS unit, free of charge. Response explaining which issues were justified, which were not, explaining which concrete actions have been taken following to the complaint.

Note: Disagreement with non-certification is not an eligible complaint. This should be expressed in an appeal. The appeal procedure is different.

Types of eligible complaints	Who ¹ can complain	Term / deadline	Complain to whom?	Response time	Type of Response
5 – A third party dispute that a service provider deserves EQUASS certification	All stakeholders (clients, employees, national – regional – local authorities, funders, other relevant partners)	As long as the certification is valid	To the EQUASS Manager or LLH who will transmit to the EQUASS Manager	Confirmation of receipt within 10 days. Response within 30 days of confirmation of receipt.	<p>The EQUASS Manager advises the Awarding Committee of the presence and nature of the complaint.</p> <p>The EQUASS Manager does an initial inquiry (via phone and e-mail) with the certified organisation, auditor, and LLH.</p> <p>Report to the complainant within the deadline with one of the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The allegations are not justified, not strong enough, not sufficiently proven or not related to EQUASS, so the certification is maintained and the case closed. - There are serious allegations and/or strong indications that a certified organisation violates the EQUASS principles and criteria, an investigation or re-assessment could be asked from the Local License Holder or directly conducted from the EQUASS Manager. <p>The consequence can be the withdrawal of the certification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EQUASS Manager requires an additional 30 days to perform its investigation of the allegations.

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