



Claims Policy

POL103-Claims_Policy-2021-09-26

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Claims Policy

Introduction

I. The Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative

HQAI's objective is to improve the Quality and Accountability of organisations working with vulnerable and at-risk population through the provision and promotion of meaningful and adapted independent quality assurance. Its services are intended to build capacity in the sector and provide consistent measurable data in the delivery of quality action, thus improving principled, accountable, efficient provision of aid to vulnerable and at-risk populations.

To all its stakeholders, HQAI is an accountable, open and trustworthy partner, which applies the internationally recognised ground rules of auditing that are impartiality, competence, responsibility, openness, confidentiality and responsiveness to complaints. Our policies, procedures and tools for independent quality assurance follow relevant ISO standards requirements. HQAI's CHS certification scheme is accredited against ISO/IEC 17065:2012.

HQAI has developed robust tools to measure efficiently where an organisation stands in relation to the [Core Humanitarian Standard \(CHS\) on Quality and Accountability](#). Tools related to other standards may be developed in the future.

HQAI is committed to the nine fundamental principles of the CHS and implements them as far as they are applicable to its own activities.

These are:

- delivery of services that respond to the needs of users
- timely delivery of these services
- avoidance of negative effects
- transparency and participation in decision-making
- provision of safe complaint mechanisms
- avoidance of duplication
- responsible management of staff, including non discrimination
- responsible use of resources

II. Scope

This document describes the HQAI's policy on claims that an organisation can make while in relation to independent verification, benchmarking or certification.

III. References

The following referenced documents can usefully complement this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO/IEC 17065 - Conformity Assessment Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services (2012)

PRO103 - Procedure on claims related to quality assurance
 POL114 - Third party quality assurance policy
 PRO114- Third party quality assurance procedure
 GUI203 - Communication and Media Advisory for Certification
 GUI204 - Communication and Media Advisory for Independent Verification
 GUI206 - HQAI Style Guide

IV. Definitions

Unless specified below and in the text, for the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions provided in POL114-Quality Assurance policy apply.

Cancellation (of a certificate)	Voluntary decision by the certified organisation to retire from the certification process. <i>Note: a decision by the organisation to drop out of the certification process following the issuance of a major non-conformity corresponds to a withdrawal of the certificate</i>
Certification mark	Protected mark, applied or issued under the rules of a certification system, indicating that confidence is provided that the relevant product, process or service is in conformity with a specific standard or other normative document
Claim	Statement, symbol or graphic that indicates an organisation has been audited under one of HQAI's schemes
Reinstatement (of a certificate)	Restoration of the right to use a certificate, following a suspension, provided the reasons for the suspension have been corrected in due time
Suspension (of a certificate)	Measure, limited in time, by which an organisation that does not respond anymore to the certification criteria can implement corrective actions. <i>Note: if the corrective action are successful to restore the conformity with the standard, the certificate is reinstated. If not the certificate is withdrawn</i>
Withdrawal (of a certificate)	Measure that normally follows a suspension by which the certificate is nullified. <i>Note: a certificate that is withdrawn cannot be reinstated.</i>

Key principles

- 1.1 Participation in one of HQAI's quality assurance schemes gives the right to the audited organisations to use specific claims, depending on the scheme they use.
- 1.2 HQAI encourages the use of claims by audited organisations as this creates visibility to, and increases the value of third-party quality assurance processes.
- 1.3 Organisations certified under HQAI's certification scheme are expected to display the certification mark prominently on their website.
- 1.4 Claims shall be true, precise (in particular specify the scope of the audit upon which they are based), accurate and not lead to misinterpretation

Note: Anyone should have easy access to the status of certification at all times.

- 1.5 HQAI strives to produce guidance and material to support audited organisations to claim the fact they are registered under one of HQAI's schemes.

Note: Specific information on the claims that are allowed can be found in PRO103 - Claims procedure and GUI203 - Communication and Media Advisory for Certification

- 1.6 Claims that are no longer valid cannot be used from the moment they lose their validity

Note: a claim may cease to be valid because the organisation has dropped off the scheme to which the claim belongs (e.g. because it went from the certification scheme to the independent verification scheme), or because a certificate was suspended, withdrawn or cancelled

- 1.7 HQAI reserves the right to undertake legal procedures for serious and persistent misuse of claims or whenever an organisation falsely declares using HQAI's services.

