



APLAC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM MANUAL

APLAC MS 000 APLAC Management System Manual

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Management System Manual is to define the APLAC quality system and internal policies and procedures.

AUTHORSHIP

This document has been written by the APLAC Quality Manager under the direction of the APLAC Board of Management.

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1. APLAC Overview

The Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated (APLAC) is a cooperation of accreditors of conformity assessment bodies including but not limited to laboratories, inspection bodies, reference material producers and proficiency testing providers in the Asia Pacific region.

APLAC was established in 1992, with the APLAC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) being signed in 1995. On 18 October 2006 APLAC became an incorporated body in New Zealand under the Incorporated Societies Act.

APLAC is one of five Specialist Regional Bodies (SRBs) recognised by the APEC Sub-committee on Standards and Conformance. APLAC has signed MOUs with two of the other APEC SRBs, APMP (Asia Pacific Metrology Program) and PAC (Pacific Accreditation Cooperation).

APLAC is a recognised region of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and it has signed MOUs with other regions.

The APLAC General Assembly is the primary body of APLAC, and the Board of Management is responsible to the General Assembly for the effective implementation of APLAC's objectives as described in the Constitution, and for the day-to-day management of APLAC. The APLAC Secretariat supports the work of the General Assembly and of the Board, and reports directly to the Board.

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2. APLAC Quality Policy

APLAC commits to complying with its objectives as described in the Constitution.

APLAC seeks to enhance the technical competence of conformity assessment bodies including but not limited to testing and calibration laboratories, inspection bodies, reference materials producers and proficiency testing providers amongst its member organisations.

APLAC seeks to demonstrate technical competence to the wider community through the APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA).

APLAC commits to operate in accordance with ILAC recognition criteria set out in IAF/ILAC-A1 and IAF/ILAC-A2 and to remain a recognised ILAC region. APLAC thereby commits to ensuring that signatories to the APLAC mutual recognition arrangement (MRA) operate in accordance with relevant recognition criteria including ISO/IEC 17011 and relevant IAF/ILAC A-series, ILAC P-series and APLAC documents.

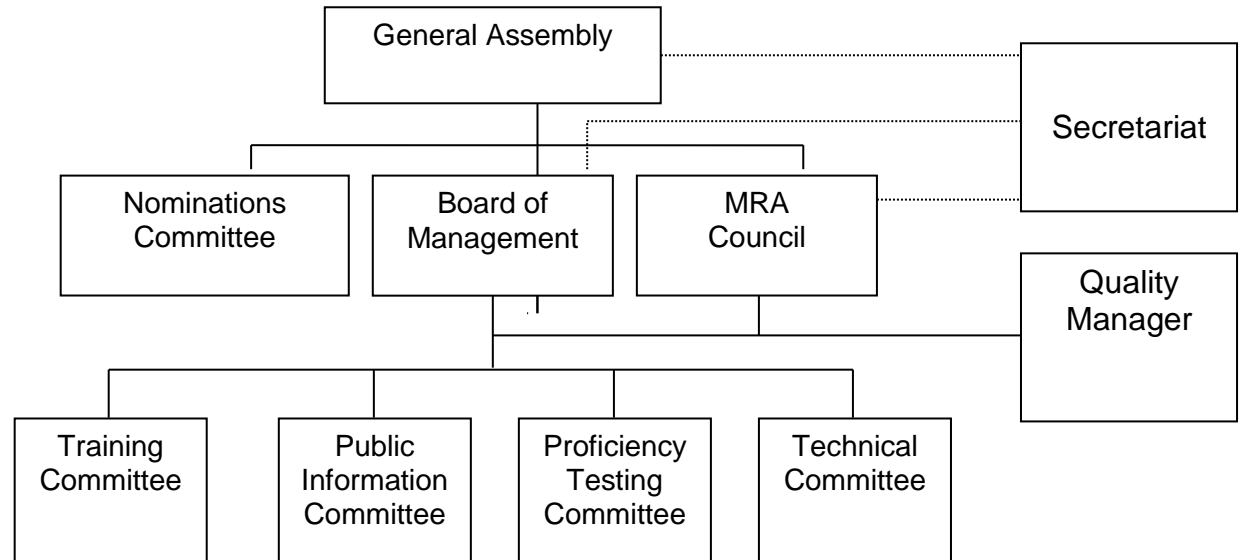
APLAC seeks to support trade facilitation in the region through the establishment of an effective and accepted Mutual Recognition Arrangement.

APLAC seeks to respond effectively to the needs of its member organisations and its stakeholders, including regulators in the region.

APLAC seeks to cooperate with other international bodies with similar or complementary objectives.

The Board of Management through the Quality Manager is responsible for the development and implementation of APLAC's management system and associated policies and procedures.

3. APLAC Structure



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4. Register of Delegated Responsibilities

This delegation register lists the delegated activities, identified by the APLAC *Constitution* clause number, the responsible person or body, and the person or body to which the activity is delegated.

REGISTER

Constitution	Activity	Responsibility	Delegation
5.2.1 (h)	approval of APLAC policy and procedure documents	General Assembly (GA)	Board of Management (BOM) for procedures related to APLAC Management System Manual and Secretariat processes, or changes in accordance with clause 7.7.3.
5.2.1 (j)	decisions on the APLAC budget and supervision of other financial matters	GA	BOM for approval of specific funding requests that fit within budget already approved by the GA
7.2.1 (b)	execution of decisions taken by the APLAC General Assembly and Board of Management	APLAC Chair	some activities may be delegated to the APLAC Secretary, Quality Manager or a member of the BoM
7.2.1 (d)	acting on behalf of APLAC between meetings of the General Assembly	APLAC Chair	some activities may be delegated to a member of the BoM, the APLAC Secretary or a GA delegate
7.2.1 (e)	promoting the interests of APLAC	APLAC Chair	some activities may be delegated to a member of the BoM, the APLAC Secretary or a GA delegate or his/her representative
7.4.1 (a)	monitoring of income and expenditure	APLAC Treasurer	day-to-day oversight may be delegated to the APLAC Secretary

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5. Overview of APLAC Documentation

Document(s)	Approval	Authorship
Constitution	General Assembly	Board of Management
APLAC Management System Manual	General Assembly	Quality Manager
MRA Series	General Assembly	Documentation Working Group
Training Committee series	General Assembly	Training Committee
Public Information series	General Assembly	Public Information Committee
Technical Committee series	General Assembly	Technical Committee
Secretariat series	General Assembly	Board of Management / Secretariat

6. External Documents Applicable to APLAC and APLAC MRA Signatories

The external documents applicable to APLAC's operation are:

IAF/ILAC-A1 IAF/ILAC Multi-Lateral Mutual Recognition Arrangements (Arrangements): Requirements and Procedures for Evaluation of a Regional Group

IAF/ILAC-A2 IAF/ILAC Multi-Lateral Mutual Recognition Arrangements (Arrangements): Requirements and Procedures for Evaluation of a Single Accreditation Body

ILAC-P12 Harmonisation of ILAC Work with the Regions

The external documents applicable to APLAC MRA signatories and applicants to enter APLAC MRA are detailed in APLAC MR 001: Procedures for Establishing and Maintaining the APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement Among Accreditation Bodies (primarily Section 3).

7. Document Control

The procedure for publication of new documents and the revision or withdrawal of existing documents is described in APLAC MS 001. It is the responsibility of the relevant APLAC committee, committee Working Group, MRA Council or APLAC Secretariat to ensure that this procedure is followed when producing a new APLAC document or revising an existing APLAC document .

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8. Management Review

- 8.1** The APLAC Board of Management with the Quality Manager are responsible for ensuring that a review of APLAC's management system is undertaken at least annually.
- 8.2** Matters to be considered as part of the management review shall include, but not be restricted to, the following:
- APLAC's continued adherence to the objectives of APLAC as set out in section 2 of the APLAC Constitution
 - review of the APLAC Strategic Plan
 - Internal audit schedule, results of internal audits, and associated corrective actions
 - outcome of ILAC evaluation of APLAC (when applicable)
 - Complaints
 - Appeals
 - reports from the Chairs of the APLAC Committees including review of committee activities, the need for new or revised documents
 - report from the Chair of the MRA Council, including feedback on evaluator performance
 - progress on implementing the "actions" and "resolutions" from the last APLAC General Assembly
 - the need to revise the APLAC Management System Manual, APLAC Constitution and APLAC SEC documents
 - opportunities for improvement to APLAC policies and procedures.
- 8.3** In practice, these items are considered routinely as part of each Board of Management meeting so a dedicated management review meeting is not conducted.
- As a minimum, a specific agenda item will be included at each mid-term Board of Management meeting to ensure that all aspects of management review have been adequately addressed and to consider the overall performance of APLAC's management system.
- 8.4** The review of these items, including actions arising, shall be recorded as part of the Minutes of the Board meeting. Progress on closure of these action items will be tracked at each BOM meeting.

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9. Internal Audits

- 9.1 An internal audit shall be scheduled by the Quality Manager in conjunction with the APLAC Board of Management every 18-24 months unless there is an identified need to do an earlier audit.
- 9.2 The auditor appointed shall normally be an APLAC evaluator who has participated in an APLAC (or other) evaluator training course.
- 9.3 The audit shall check compliance with the relevant clauses of the following documents:
- IAF/ILAC A1 – IAF/ILAC Multi-Lateral Mutual Recognition Arrangements (Arrangements): Requirements and Procedures for Evaluation of a Regional Group
 - IAF/ILAC A2 – IAF/ILAC Multi-Lateral Mutual Recognition Arrangements (Arrangements): Requirements and Procedures for Evaluation of a Single Accreditation Body
 - APLAC MR 001 – Procedures for Establishing and Maintaining the APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement Among Accreditation Bodies.

as well as compliance with APLAC's Management System Manual and other relevant APLAC procedures.

- 9.4 The auditor may draw up checklists to assist with the conduct of the audit.
- 9.5 Findings of the audit shall be classified as either:
- nonconformity
 - concern
 - comment
- Note:** Definitions of these terms can be found in annex 3, section B of IAF/ILAC A1.
- 9.6 The findings of the audit shall be reported by the auditor to the APLAC Quality Manager, who in turn will report to the Board of Management (in the format given in form Q09.1) along with recommendations to address any findings. The audit identification shall be by year and month, e.g. 2006/06.
- 9.7 For each non-conformity or concern raised a corrective and preventive action request (CPAR) (see form Q11.1) shall be raised.
- 9.8 The auditor shall be thanked in writing for conducting the internal audit by the APLAC Secretariat.
- 9.9 The Quality Manager shall review the audit report and CARs raised and assign the CPARs to the appropriate person for resolution.

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- 9.10** The auditor shall be notified by the APLAC Secretariat of the agreed corrective and/or preventive actions.
- 9.11** The implementation of the corrective and preventive action(s) shall be reviewed by the APLAC Board of Management at its next meeting.

10. Complaints

Introduction

This procedure covers the handling of all types of complaints against APLAC or against APLAC members and MRA signatories, including in relation to breaches of the APLAC Code of Ethics, and against APLAC procedures and practices. It also covers disputes between APLAC members. Sources of complaints may include a complaint received initially by ILAC and referred to APLAC by ILAC because the complaint is against an APLAC member, including an APLAC MRA signatory: see ILAC R5, clause 4.2 b.

A complaint must be submitted in writing with relevant supporting information.

10.1 Complaints

10.1.1 Responsibility

The APLAC Secretariat is responsible for recording the complaint in the Complaints Register, for acknowledging receipt of the complaint, and for referring it to the APLAC Quality Manager and Board of Management. Receipt of a complaint referred to APLAC by ILAC is acknowledged to both the ILAC Secretariat and the complainant. The APLAC Secretariat is also responsible for advising the organisation that is the subject of the complaint, that a complaint has been received and of the nature of the complaint, as well as seeking any information from it in relation to the complaint.

The APLAC Quality Manager acting on behalf of the Board of Management is responsible for the investigation and resolution of complaints. The Quality Manager shall determine the appropriate mechanism for the investigation based on the nature of the complaint, e.g. APLAC process, technical issue, etc. Normally the Quality Manager and up to three impartial persons shall be appointed as an ad hoc group to investigate the complaint, with support from the APLAC Secretariat. The members of the ad hoc group will normally be drawn from the Board of Management or an APLAC Committee. If deemed appropriate, experts external to APLAC may be included in the group to assist with the investigation.

Where the Quality Manager cannot participate in the investigation, for example, due to a conflict of interest, the Chair will appoint a member of the Board of Management to conduct the investigation.

10.1.2 Processing a Complaint

A complaint shall be sent in writing to the APLAC Secretariat. Any complaints, whether originating from within APLAC or externally, shall be registered by the Secretariat in the Complaints Register (form Q10.1).

If the complaint is by an accredited organisation against its accreditor, the organisation shall be asked if it has been through the accreditation body's complaints/appeals procedure. If it has not, it shall be advised it should pursue that course of action first.

If the complaint is against the complainant's domestic accreditation body, the complainant also shall be asked if it has been through the accreditation body's complaints/appeals procedure, and shall be advised to follow that process initially.

The Secretariat shall then send the complaint to the APLAC Quality Manager who shall decide if the complaint covers a matter that is within APLAC's area of responsibility. If it is found to be within APLAC's area of responsibility, the Quality Manager shall determine the appropriate mechanism for undertaking the investigation (refer 10.1.1).

Within 30 days the APLAC Secretariat shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant that the ad hoc group has been convened to investigate the complaint, and shall seek the complainant's confirmation that it accepts that its name will be revealed to the subject of the complaint as part of the investigation. If the complainant declines to have its name revealed the Quality Manager shall decide if it is feasible to continue or not with an investigation. If the Quality Manager is of the opinion that all or part of the complaint is outside of APLAC's area of responsibility, the complainant shall be advised of this, with reasons for the decision. The Secretariat shall also advise the subject of the complaint of receipt of the complaint and of the nature of the complaint.

If it is expected it will take some time to resolve the complaint, the complainant shall be advised of this and shall be given status update reports throughout the process, as appropriate.

The parties to the complaint shall be given the opportunity to participate in the investigation of the complaint in order to clarify issues and to establish the relevant facts. In general, investigation of the complaint shall be by email, however it may be decided to finalise the investigation by a face-to-face meeting with the interested parties at the time of an APLAC meeting.

Upon completion of the investigation of the complaint, the Board shall be advised in writing of the outcome, including any recommendations and corrective actions. The Board shall consider the advice and take the necessary action to resolve the complaint. The APLAC Secretariat shall promptly advise the parties to the complaint in writing of the outcome of the Board's deliberations.

If resolution of the complaint leads to a change in an APLAC policy or procedure or to clarification of a policy or procedure, the final decision on the new or revised policy or procedure shall be concluded in accordance with the APLAC's policy and approval (documentation) procedures.

10.1.3 Complaint against an APLAC MRA Signatory

A complaint concerning the activities of an APLAC MRA signatory that impinges on its signatory status shall be referred to the Chair of the APLAC MRA Council, who is a member of the Board. The MRA Council Chair shall convene the ad hoc group, in consultation with the other Board members. When the complaint involves the body represented by the MRA Council Chair, the complaint shall be referred to the APLAC Chair.

When relevant, the team leader for the next evaluation of the APLAC MRA signatory shall be briefed about the complaint and the outcome, and may be asked to follow-up on the satisfactory resolution of the issue as part of the evaluation.

10.1.4 Complaint against an APLAC Member or APLAC Committee

The APLAC Board of Management shall discuss the complaint and decide how to proceed with a complaint against an APLAC member or APLAC committee that may include a claim of breach of the APLAC Constitution or APLAC Code of Ethics. It may also be against the activities or decisions of the APLAC General Assembly or of an APLAC committee.

10.1.5 Disputes between APLAC Members

In dealing with a conflict between APLAC members, the Quality Manager shall ask the parties involved to settle the conflict between themselves.

If the parties fail to come to an agreement or if confirmation is needed as to whether the agreement is in line with APLAC policies and procedures, the issue shall be referred to the APLAC Secretariat for further processing by the Board.

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10.1.6 Complaint against APLAC from an External Source

It is difficult to have prescriptive rules for the handling of this type of complaint, that could be received initially by anybody within the APLAC community, and that could be made against a number of activities, e.g. the work of a committee, an APLAC document. The general rule is that the ad hoc group set up by the Quality Manager shall ask the responsible person within APLAC to clarify the issue.

10.1.7 Complaint against Delegate/Participant in APLAC Activity

It is difficult to have a prescriptive process for handling this type of complaint which could be, for example, a complaint against a delegate/observer at an APLAC meeting or an evaluator/observer at an APLAC evaluation. This complaint could be received by anyone within the APLAC community but ideally should be reported in writing (preferably) as quickly as practicable to the Quality Manager or Board to facilitate a thorough and fair investigation. As a general rule, the Quality Manager will establish an ad hoc group to investigate and details will be clarified with all parties to the complaint.

10.1.8 Records

As a minimum the following records shall be maintained by the APLAC Secretariat :

- (i) copy of complaint and supporting documents, as well as any additional information provided by any party during the investigation
- (ii) names of the members of the ad hoc group
- (iii) copy of the report on the investigation
- (iv) copy of the Board's decision
- (v) copy of final response to complainant
- (vi) any other relevant correspondence or documents

11. Appeals against APLAC Decisions

Introduction

This procedure covers the handling of appeals against decisions made by APLAC, except those made by the APLAC MRA Council relating to APLAC MRA signatory status (refer to APLAC MR008). Such decisions will generally have been made by the General Assembly and might include but not be limited to refusal of membership to an applicant organisation, suspension or withdrawal membership, imposition of a sanction for a breach of the Code of Ethics.

Appeals must be submitted in writing with the relevant supporting documentation.

11.1 Responsibility

The APLAC Secretariat is responsible for recording the appeal in the Appeals Register (form Q10.2), for acknowledging receipt of the appeal, and for referring it to the APLAC Quality Manager.

The APLAC Quality Manager acting on behalf of the Board of Management is responsible for the consideration and resolution of the appeal. The Quality Manager will determine the appropriate mechanism based on the nature of the appeal. Normally the Quality Manager and up to three impartial members of the Board shall be appointed as an ad hoc group to consider the appeal, with support from the APLAC Secretariat. If considered appropriate, experts external to the Board may form part of the ad hoc group or may be consulted by the ad hoc group to assist with the resolution of the appeal.

Where the Quality Manager cannot participate in the consideration of an appeal, for example, due to a conflict of interest, the Chair will appoint a member of the Board of Management to consider the appeal.

11.2 Processing an Appeal

The appeal shall be sent in writing to the APLAC Secretary within 30 days of the notification of the decision against which the appeal is being lodged. The appeal shall include:

- (i) the decision by APLAC being appealed;
- (ii) details of the basis of the appellant's appeal;
- (iii) the remedy sought and requested time frames in which actions should be done;
- (iv) the name and title of the executive or official who will represent the organisation and any other person(s) who will accompany the executive or official at the appeals process.

The Secretariat shall send the appeal to the APLAC Quality Manager who shall review the information to establish its validity in accordance with the above, and whether the requested actions and timeframes are practical and achievable. The Secretary may, on behalf of and under the direction of the Quality Manager, negotiate with the appellant to define a mutually satisfactory process to consider the remedy sought.

The Quality Manager on behalf of the APLAC Board of Management shall determine the appropriate mechanism for considering the appeal (refer 11.1).

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The Secretariat shall acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 30 days and advise the appellant how the appeal will be considered.

Once consideration of the appeal has been completed, the outcome shall be reported to the Board of Management. This shall include a statement as to whether the appeal has been upheld or dismissed. If the appeal is upheld, the report shall also include any action(s) necessary to implement the outcome of the appeal e.g. ballot by General Assembly.

The APLAC Secretariat shall promptly advise the appellant in writing of the outcome of the appeal. This decision shall be accepted as binding.

11.3 Records

As a minimum the following records shall be maintained by the APLAC Secretariat:

- (i) copy of the appeal and any supporting documents
- (ii) names of the members of the ad hoc group
- (iii) copy of the report on the consideration of the appeal and the recommendation(s)
- (iv) copy of the General Assembly resolution and of the ballot papers
- (v) copy of the final response to the appellant
- (vi) any other relevant correspondence or documents.

12. Corrective and Preventive Action

12.1 Corrective and preventive action requests can arise from a number of sources including but not limited to internal audits, management reviews, complaints, Board of Management, committees, members. The raising of corrective and preventive action requests (CPARs) resulting from internal audits is covered in section 9 above. Corrective and preventive actions resulting from management reviews and meetings are recorded in the minutes of those meetings as action items and specific corrective or preventive action requests (CPARs) are not raised.

12.2 All requests for corrective or preventive action shall be recorded on the corrective and preventive action request form, Q11.1. The form shall be sent initially to the Secretariat that shall assign a unique identification number (year plus a sequential number, e.g. 2006/01). The Secretariat shall forward the CPAR form to the APLAC Quality Manager for review.

The Quality Manager shall assign the CPAR to the most appropriate person to investigate the issue and take initial action, and shall set the date by which the action shall be completed.

The person to whom the CPAR is assigned shall carry out the investigation and take action as necessary, including identifying underlying issues, when applicable. This person shall complete section 2a of the form and sign and date the entry, and return the form to the Quality Manager who shall determine if the action taken is satisfactory.

If necessary the Quality Manager shall assign the CPAR to the appropriate person to undertake action on the underlying issue.

The Board of Management shall review the effectiveness of the corrective action and sign off of the report.

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13. Document and Record Management

13.1 Introduction

The APLAC Secretariat is responsible for the maintenance and retention of all documents, records, reports, correspondence and files, and for their archiving. Procedures are described in SEC 100.

13.2 Ownership

APLAC is the owner of all documents, records, reports, correspondence and related documentary information arising from its activities.

Note: While most records are retained directly by the Secretariat, some, such as APLAC evaluator performance records, are initially maintained elsewhere (see Section 8 of MR 004).

13.3 Retention Period

The retention period for all documents, records, reports, correspondence, etc shall be as listed below.

<i>Document, etc</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Retention Period</i>
List of APLAC controlled documents	SEC 009	Current
APLAC documents (as listed in SEC 009)	Various	Permanent
Applications for membership	SEC 017	Permanent on Member's file
Application to join APLAC MRA	MR 003	Permanent on Member's file
Evaluation reports and supporting information		Permanent
Membership list (GA and MRA Council)	SEC 020; 038	Permanent
APLAC MRA Signatories list	SEC 039	Permanent
Committee Membership lists	Various SEC	10 years
Mail Register	Mail Register	Permanent
Complaints Register	Complaints Register	5 years after resolution of complaint

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<i>Document, etc</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Retention Period</i>
Appeals Register	Appeals Register	5 years after resolution of appeal
Records related to complaints	Relevant AB file	Permanent
Internal audits	Audit records	10 years
Management review	BoM Minutes	10 years
Evaluation schedule	Schedule spreadsheet	Permanent
Evaluation competencies	Competencies spreadsheet	Permanent
Evaluator biographies	Biographies	For 4 years after person ceases to be an evaluator
Evaluator performance log	MR 004	As for biographies
Evaluation feedback form	MR 004	Permanent
GA Agenda papers		Permanent
GA Minutes		Permanent
BoM Agenda papers		Permanent
BoM Minutes		Permanent
MRA Council Agenda papers		Permanent
MRA Council Minutes		Permanent
Committee Minutes		Permanent
APLAC PT program reports	Various	Permanent
Notification of changes to documents	Various	Permanent
BoM correspondence, general	Various	5 years
GA correspondence, general	Various	5 years
MRA Council correspondence, general	Various	5 years
Committee correspondence	Various	5 years

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<i>Document, etc</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Retention Period</i>
Documents related to establishment	Various	Permanent (file 1.0)
Documents related to incorporation	Various	Permanent (file 1.0)
APLAC budget and accounts	File 0.3.1	10 years
Contracts, e.g. PTB	Various	10 years
General correspondence with members	Various	5 years
Other correspondence (EA, ILAC, etc)	Various	5 years
Evaluation of APLAC		Permanent

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14. APLAC Committees and Working Groups

- 14.1** APLAC may establish committees, sub-committees and working groups to carry out the objectives, aims and tasks of APLAC.

APLAC committees are of a permanent nature. Subcommittees and working groups may be permanent or may be set up to deal with a specific task or issue and then discontinued.

APLAC committees seek to reach decisions by a process of consensus but in the event that a vote is necessary, a simple majority of committee members attending the meeting is required, with the exception of votes by the MRA Council on signatories to the APLAC MRA. The quorum for meetings of committees will be decided upon by each APLAC committee, subject to endorsement by the Board of Management.

14.2 Committee Membership

The APLAC committee members shall be nominated by their respective APLAC Member representative, unless otherwise determined in the terms of reference of the committee in question.

Members of APLAC committees are appointed for terms not exceeding three years but may be reappointed by their Member representative.

Each APLAC committee shall have a Chair elected by a ballot by the General Assembly.

The term of office of a committee Chair is two years. A Committee Chair may be re-elected.

14.3 Committee Operations

All APLAC committees shall have defined terms of reference (provided in the format given in Q16.1) that shall be endorsed by the APLAC General Assembly.

Committees generally meet annually in association with the General Assembly but may undertake activities outside formal meetings. Participation in meetings is generally restricted to committee members but observers may attend at the discretion of the Committee Chair.

Each committee must establish and maintain a comprehensive work plan that is aligned with APLAC's Strategic Plan. The work plan must identify specific committee activities and include a schedule for the review of the APLAC documents for which the committee is responsible.

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At each meeting, each committee must as a minimum:

- review its terms of reference and propose changes as necessary
- review and update the annual work plan
- identify specific funding requirements
- review reports from its subcommittees and/or working groups

The Chair of each committee may use the Checklist for Committee Chairs SEC 101 to assist with the conduct of committee activities.

14.4 Committee Reporting

The Chairs of Committees are responsible for reporting on the Committee's activities to the General Assembly and the Board of Management as follows:

14.4.1 General Assembly

- Written report on Committee's activities including an up to date work plan
- Verbal summary report on the Committee meeting presented to General Assembly including proposed changes to the terms of reference and updates to / progress on Committee's work plan

14.4.2 Board of Management

- Committee membership list
- Up-to-date work plan
- Listing of subcommittees/working groups and their convenors

14.5 Sub-Committees and Working Groups

The Board of Management and the APLAC Committees may set up sub-committees and/or working groups. The terms of reference shall be endorsed by the General Assembly

The convenors of sub-committees and working groups shall be appointed by the Chair of the relevant 'parent' Committee and the appointment shall be reported to the Board of Management in the next report by the Committee Chair. The term of office of convenors of working groups is two years. Convenors may be re-appointed.

Committees that have permanent sub-committees and working groups shall decide how members are appointed. Appointments to permanent subcommittees and working groups shall be for three years. Members can be reappointed.

Members of sub-committees and working groups established to deal with a particular task or issue are appointed for the duration of the specific project under consideration.

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The Committee Chairs and the convenors of APLAC sub-committees and working groups may invite other experts to participate in their work.

Subcommittees and working groups will meet as necessary but will generally conduct activities by other means. An appropriate record of these activities must be made e.g. minutes, action lists etc. The convenor is responsible for reporting to the Chair of the 'parent' Committee to enable compliance with the reporting requirements outlined in 14.4.

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15. Nominations and Ballot Process

15.1 Nominations Committee Membership

The General Assembly may establish a committee charged with the task of processing nominations and facilitating elections for the positions of APLAC Chair, members of the Board of Management and the Chairs of other committees.

The Committee shall consist of the Immediate Past Chair of APLAC as the Chair, and one representative from each of three full members appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Board of Management. When there is no Immediate Past Chair, the Board of Management shall appoint an impartial Board member to oversee the ballot process.

Members of the Committee shall be appointed for a two-year term, and casual vacancies shall be filled by the approval of APLAC Full Members after nomination by the Board of Management for the balance of the original term.

Candidates for election shall not be eligible to participate in the Nominations Committee.

15.2 Nomination Process

Unless otherwise specified, office bearers shall be elected at the annual meetings of the APLAC General Assembly.

Not less than two months prior to any meeting of the General Assembly at which elections are to be held, the APLAC Secretary on behalf of the Chair of the Nominations Committee shall advise the official General Assembly delegate of each Full Member that elections are to be held and invite the nomination of suitable candidates for the relevant positions. The invitation shall include advice on any special conditions which may apply to particular positions.

Nominations can only be made by the official General Assembly delegate of an APLAC Full Member. Self-nominations are not accepted.

Nominees for the APLAC Board of Management and for the positions of APLAC Chair and MRA Council Chair must be the official General Assembly delegate of an APLAC Full Member.

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Any member wishing to nominate candidates shall obtain the agreement of those candidates for such nomination prior to submitting a completed nomination form (form Q17.1) to the Chair of the Nominations Committee, with a copy to the APLAC Secretariat.

To facilitate the submission of a nomination form, an email accepting the nomination and accompanying the completed nomination form will be accepted as equivalent to a signed form.

Nominations shall be accepted no later than 24 hours prior to the commencement of the General Assembly meeting.

15.3 Ballot Process

Where more than one nomination is received for any position, the Nominations Committee shall arrange for a secret ballot to be conducted at the meeting of the General Assembly. To be elected, a candidate must achieve an absolute majority (greater than 50 percent of all valid votes cast) of formal votes cast using the preferential voting system described in SEC 102.

A ballot paper shall be prepared by the Nominations Committee listing all candidates in an order that shall be decided by selecting the names at random.

Only the official General Assembly delegate or an alternate, nominated in writing, is entitled to vote. Proxy votes are not permitted.

Members entitled to vote, shall indicate their preferences by placing the numbers 1, 2, 3... in order of preference against the candidates of their choice up to at least the number of positions to be filled.

A vote that is not marked with sufficient preferences will not be declared invalid.

A vote will be declared invalid if it is:

- not marked;
- not marked with numbers (e.g. marked with a symbol);
- not marked with at least the number 1;
- marked in such a way that the voter's intention is unclear.

The Nominations Committee shall be responsible for the conduct of all ballots associated with the election of office bearers, and for certifying and declaring the results of the elections.

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16. Confidentiality

Certain information available to APLAC Members, APLAC committees, APLAC MRA Council and APLAC evaluation teams is privileged information and shall be treated as confidential.

APLAC evaluation teams shall sign the confidentiality statement appended to APLAC MR 001.

Attendees at meetings of the APLAC MRA Council shall sign the confidentiality statement given in form Q18.1.

For all other instances when confidentiality is required an appropriate confidentiality statement shall be prepared by the Secretariat and signed by the relevant APLAC members, committee members or others present at the meeting or event.

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17. Conflict of Interest

From time to time an APLAC General Assembly, Board of Management, Committee or other meeting may be asked to consider and decide on a matter with which a participant in the meeting may have a conflict of interest.

The person affected shall declare his/her interest and a decision will be taken as to whether it is a conflict and what, if any, action is necessary. In some cases, a declaration of the interest will be sufficient. In other cases, disallowing the person to participate in discussion about an issue or exclusion from the meeting for the particular agenda item may be necessary. The decision is the responsibility of the Chair of the meeting and it shall be recorded in the minutes.

A request that Board of Management members state any potential conflict of interest with a particular agenda item shall be a standing agenda item for all Board meetings.

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18. APLAC Website

APLAC's website is found at www.aplac.org.

It consists of a public area and a "members only" area. Access to the "members only" area is available to all APLAC members (Full and Associate) and to other interested parties, e.g. ILAC, other Regional Groups, APEC SRBs, as identified from time-to-time by APLAC.

The designated representative of each organisation is given her/his own log-on and password. Each APLAC committee is provided, via the committee Chair, with a generic committee log-on and password. It is the responsibility of the committee Chairs to manage the use and confidentiality of that information. There is an additional password to access the pages for the APLAC General Assembly, APLAC Board of Management, and APLAC MRA Council. These passwords are provided only to, respectively, the designated General Assembly representative for each member, the Board of Management members, and the designated delegate of each full member to the APLAC MRA Council. These passwords shall be changed after each election. Passwords will not include lower case "L" or upper case "I" or "O".

The APLAC Secretariat administers the APLAC website and is responsible for assigning log-on and passwords. APLAC signs a Deed of Agreement for provision of and maintenance of the website with a provider selected by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Board of Management.

The APLAC Board of Management, on behalf of the APLAC General Assembly and via the Secretariat, is the arbiter of the content of the APLAC website, both coverage and text. It is also responsible for authorising additions to the website content. Proposals for changes in content, coverage and text may come from any APLAC Member and/or committee.

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19. Financial Resources

19.1 Introduction

APLAC's financial resources come from:

- Membership fees charged annually to APLAC's members; and
- Other income (e.g. interest on bank account, other funding).

APLAC's expenditure covers:

- The operation of the Secretariat;
- Professional service providers e.g. financial audit, legal
- Cost incurred for approved work items e.g. proficiency testing programs, training.

APLAC's budget and financial reports are prepared in Australian Dollars (AUD).

19.2 Responsibilities

The Board of Management is delegated by the General Assembly to oversee the proper use of APLAC's financial resources including to ensure that all sources of funds are managed with due diligence and that costs are contained within budget limits (APLAC Constitution (SEC 052), clause 6.3(j)).

The Board of Management appoints from its membership the APLAC Treasurer whose duties are listed in clause 7.4.1 of the APLAC Constitution.

The APLAC Secretary is responsible for the day to day management of the accounts and the monitoring of cash flow.

A chartered accountant carries out a statutory audit of the accounts every year.

19.3 Budgeting

19.3.1 The General Assembly is responsible for approving the budget for the next financial year at each General Assembly meeting.

Note: The financial year runs from 1 January to 31 December.

19.3.2 The budget is prepared by the Treasurer with assistance from the APLAC Secretary for in principle approval of the Board of Management. Particular attention is given to the projected income and the expected level of membership fees with a view to avoid unexpected fee increases and to maintain an appropriate level of retained earnings.

19.3.3 Rules for the calculation of membership fees are detailed in SEC 103.

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- 19.3.4 In general when the General Assembly approves the annual budget it is also approving specific expenditures for specific activities, e.g. X PT programs, Y training courses, and Z defined representational activities. (Refer SEC 104 for the procedure for submitting funding requests.)
- 19.3.5 In some cases specified “contingency” funding may be approved against a line item when the activity to be funded has not yet been fully defined. In these cases, the committee or group requesting the funding shall provide to the APLAC Board of Management for approval, as early as possible, full details of the activity and the estimated costs involved.

19.4 Financial Oversight

- 19.4.1 The agenda papers for each Board of Management meeting and each General Assembly shall include up-to-date financial statements including projections to the end of the financial year. A commentary shall be provided by the Secretary on behalf of the Treasurer to explain any variances and any other key issues.
- 19.4.2 During the year additional requests for representational travel may arise, depending upon requests to APLAC from outside bodies to attend various events. The APLAC Board of Management shall approve such requests up to a cost of AUD 8,000 provided they are within the budgeted amount for representational travel.

Any other requests for funding or expenditure outside of the approved budget shall be reviewed by the Board of Management and referred to the General Assembly for approval (or otherwise), e.g. by email correspondence.

- 19.4.3 The closing date for the accounts is 31 January in the year following the financial year. The accounts are then audited by an independent financial auditor and the auditor’s report and the associated financial reports shall be included in the agenda papers of the next General Assembly for approval. A commentary shall be provided by the Treasurer to explain the key issues in particular to explain any variances and to highlight any impact on APLAC’s operations in the future.

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20. Departures from Documented APLAC Procedures

APLAC procedures are prepared, approved and continually improved based on experiences gained through its on-going operation and through the input of Members. All procedures are subjected to a formal review at regular intervals. However, they cannot anticipate all eventualities and judgement is needed in the interpretation of the requirements to ensure that the initial intent of a particular requirement is met. From time to time, circumstances will arise where existing procedures are inadequate to address the situation at hand, or cannot be fully implemented without jeopardising the smooth operation of APLAC activities.

Departures from documented procedures are permissible under appropriate circumstances but shall be fully justified, documented and authorised. Such departures may be:

- Planned departures, where it is recognised in advance that APLAC procedures will not be adequate or are unable to be fulfilled and there is insufficient time to draft and approve new/amended procedures;
- Unplanned departures, where departures have already occurred and/or there is an urgent need to authorise alternative actions to ensure necessary activities can continue.

Appendix 1 sets out the authorities for dealing with both planned and unplanned departures from APLAC procedures, and also provides guidance on possible complementary actions.

Note: APLAC documents that are not considered “procedural requirements documents” are not included in this appendix and are therefore not covered by this procedure.

APPENDIX 1 Table of Authorities

APLAC Procedural Document	Brief Title	Unplanned Departure		Planned Departure	
		Authority	Associated Action	Authority	Associated Action
SEC 052	APLAC Constitution	General Assembly		General Assembly	
QM	APLAC Management System Manual	APLAC Secretary	Notify APLAC Chair as soon as practical	Board of Management	Review need for new or amended procedure
PT 001, PT 002,	APLAC PT Programmes	Programme Coordinator	Inform PT Committee at the appropriate time	PT Committee Chair	Inform PT Committee at appropriate time
PR 009	APLAC News Notes	Publishing Accreditation Body	Inform APLAC Secretary as soon as practical	APLAC Secretary	
SEC 017	Membership Application	Board of Management	Notify General Assembly at the appropriate time	General Assembly	
SEC 041	Hosting GA Meetings	Meeting Hosts	Inform APLAC Secretary as soon as practical	Board of Management	
SEC 046	APLAC Logo Use	Board of Management		Board of Management	
SEC 053	APLAC Strategic Plan	Board of Management		General Assembly	
TR 002	APLAC Courses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General • APLAC funding 	Training Committee Chair Board of Management		Training Committee Board of Management	

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APLAC Procedural Document	Brief Title	Unplanned Departure		Planned Departure	
		Authority	Associated Action	Authority	Associated Action
MR 001 (general)	Maintaining the MRA	MRA Council Chair	Ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MRA Council is informed of departures at the appropriate time • If necessary, evaluation Team Leaders informed as soon as possible (with Team Leaders to inform members of their team) 	MRA Council	Ensure, if necessary, evaluation Team Leaders informed as soon as possible (with Team Leaders to inform members of their team)
MR001; Part 1	General	MRA Council	Ensure, if necessary, evaluation Team Leaders informed as soon as possible (with Team Leaders to inform members of their team)	General Assembly	Ensure, if necessary, evaluation Team Leaders informed as soon as possible (with Team Leaders to inform members of their team)

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APLAC Procedural Document	Brief Title	Unplanned Departure		Planned Departure	
		Authority	Associated Action	Authority	Associated Action
MR001; Part 2	The MRA Process	MRA Council Chair	Ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MRA Council is informed of departures at the appropriate time If necessary, evaluation Team Leaders informed as soon as possible (with Team Leaders to inform members of their team) 	MRA Council	Ensure, if necessary, evaluation Team Leaders informed as soon as possible (with Team Leaders to inform members of their team)
MR001; Part 3	The Evaluation Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During on-site evaluations 	Evaluation Team Leader	Notify MRA Council Chair as soon as practical	MRA Council Chair	Ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MRA Council is informed of departures at the appropriate time If necessary, other evaluation Team Leaders informed as soon as possible (with Team Leaders to inform members of their team)

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APLAC Procedural Document	Brief Title	Unplanned Departure		Planned Departure	
		Authority	Associated Action	Authority	Associated Action
MR001; Part 3 (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre- & post- on-site evaluation procedures 	MRA Council Chair	Ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MRA Council is informed of departures at the appropriate time If necessary, evaluation Team Leaders informed as soon as possible (with Team Leaders to inform members of their team) 	MRA Council Chair	Ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MRA Council is informed of departures at the appropriate time If necessary, evaluation Team Leaders informed as soon as possible (with Team Leaders to inform members of their team)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Leader appointment 	MRA Council Chair	Seek MRA Council endorsement of the departure as soon as practical	MRA Council	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team composition 	Evaluation Team Leader	Notify MRA Council Chair as soon as practical	MRA Council Chair	
MR 003	MRA Application	MRA Council Chair	Inform MRA Council at time of review	MRA Council	

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APLAC Procedural Document	Brief Title	Unplanned Departure		Planned Departure	
		Authority	Associated Action	Authority	Associated Action
MR 004	Evaluators	MRA Council Chair	Inform MRA Council Evaluator Performance WG as soon as practical. Ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MRA Council is informed of departures at the appropriate time • If necessary, evaluation Team Leaders informed as soon as possible (with Team Leaders to inform members of their team) 	MRA Council	Ensure, if necessary, evaluation Team Leaders informed as soon as possible (with Team Leaders to inform members of their team)

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APLAC Procedural Document	Brief Title	Unplanned Departure		Planned Departure	
		Authority	Associated Action	Authority	Associated Action
MR 006	Joint Evaluations	MRA Council Chair	Ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MRA Council is informed of departures at the appropriate time • If necessary, other relevant evaluation Team Leaders informed as soon as possible (with Team Leaders to inform members of their team) 	MRA Council	Ensure, if necessary, other relevant evaluation Team Leaders informed as soon as possible (with Team Leaders to inform members of their team)
MR 008	MRA Council Rules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications • Team Leader appointment 	MRA Council Chair MRA Council Chair MRA Council Chair	Inform MRA Council at time of review Seek MRA Council endorsement of the departure as soon as practical	MRA Council MRA Council MRA Council	

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APLAC Procedural Document	Brief Title	Unplanned Departure		Planned Departure	
		Authority	Associated Action	Authority	Associated Action
MR 008 (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation reports & team recommendations 	MRA Council Chair	Ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MRA Council is informed of departures at the appropriate time If necessary, evaluation Team Leaders informed as soon as possible (with Team Leaders to inform members of their team) 	MRA Council Chair	Ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MRA Council is informed of departures at the appropriate time If necessary, evaluation Team Leaders informed as soon as possible (with Team Leaders to inform members of their team)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-making (all aspects) 	MRA Council		MRA Council	
MR 009	Evaluation Reports	Evaluation Team Leader	Ensure MRA Council is informed of departures at the appropriate time	MRA Council Chair	Ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MRA Council is informed of departures at the appropriate time If necessary, evaluation Team Leaders informed as soon as possible (with Team Leaders to inform members of their team)

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APLAC Procedural Document	Brief Title	Unplanned Departure		Planned Departure	
		Authority	Associated Action	Authority	Associated Action
MR 011	Evaluation Guidelines	Evaluation Team Leader		Evaluation Team Leader	

AMENDMENT TABLE

This table provides a summary of the changes to the document with this issue.

Section(s)	Amendment(s)
Various	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual renamed Management System Manual • APLAC contact details • Section renumbering • Minor editorial
Table of Contents	Revised in accordance with changes
1. What is APLAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renamed • Updated in line with changes to Constitution • Deletion of APLAC's tasks
2. APLAC Quality Policy	Revised to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reference to APLAC's objectives • APLAC's compliance with IAF/ILAC A1 and A2 • MRA signatory compliance with relevant criteria • Quality Manager's responsibility
4. Register of Delegated Responsibilities	Updated in line with changes to the Constitution
6. External Documents Applicable to APLAC and APLAC MRA Signatories	Revised title
7. Document Control	Procedure relocated to new MS 001 document. Reduction of comment period to 30 days
8. Management Review	Procedure updated to reflect current practice, in particular the overlap in coverage between BoM meetings and management review
9. Internal Audits	Editorial only
10. Complaints and Appeals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocation of 'Appeals' to separate process (section 11) • Provision for Quality Manager to determine investigation mechanism • Provision for alternate to Quality Manager where necessary
11 (new)	New section - Appeals

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12. Ownership, Maintenance etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section renamed, renumbered• Procedures relocated to a new SEC document
13. Annual Membership Fees	Relocated to a new SEC procedure
14. Processing Notification of Changes	Relocated to a new SEC procedure
15. Requests for APLAC Funding	Relocated to a new SEC procedure
16. APLAC Committees and Working Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many editorial changes and restructuring• Terms of appointment for subcommittee members• Requirement for subcommittees to make a record of any activities and to report to Chair of parent Committee• Checklist relocated to SEC document
17. Nominations Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section renamed• Information included on validity of votes• Process for preferential vote system relocated to a SEC procedure
19. Confidentiality	Editorial
21. APLAC Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section renamed, restructured• Editorial changes only
22. Departures	Editorial
Appendices I, II and III	Deleted