



Procedures for Mentoring and Suspension with mentoring

1. The “Scheme Member” may be either an Approved Certifier or an Approved Body who is a member of the SER scheme. An Approved Body is represented by the Certification Coordinator(s) listed in the Account Information.
2. The Mentoring process will be followed:
 - when an audit outcome of "Account requires mentoring" is received
 - at any other time when the SER Board has decided that it would be appropriate for a Scheme Member to undergo mentoring as a result of concerns regarding their certification practice.
3. The Suspension with mentoring process will be followed:
 - when an audit outcome of "Account to be suspended" is received
 - at any other time when the SER Board has decided that it would be appropriate for a Scheme Member to be suspended and undergo mentoring as a result of concerns regarding their certification practice.
4. When the Mentoring or Suspension with mentoring process is the result of the outcome of an audit it is not usually charged for, but the SER Board may choose to impose a charge when the process is required for other reasons. If a charge is imposed, this will be at the same rate as for chargeable audits.
5. The process will commence either:
 - at the conclusion of the time periods provided for in the SER Complaints, Disciplinary and Appeals Procedures.
 - or at an earlier date with the agreement of the Scheme Member and the Head of Certification.
6. At the commencement of the process the Scheme Member’s membership status will be changed to:
 - "Active with mentoring" when mentoring only is required
 - “Suspended with mentoring” when the Scheme Member is to be suspended while the mentoring process is completed.
7. On receipt of the email informing them of their change of status, the Scheme member is required within 10 working days to confirm acceptance of the mentoring process.
8. The Active with mentoring process requires the Scheme Member to submit formal proposals to the Scottish Registration Board “SRB” indicating a clear understanding of the issues which have led to the mentoring and offering well-defined proposals for ensuring that the issues do not recur. Formal proposals must be submitted within 15 working days of the mentoring meeting (see paragraph 13).

9. The Suspended with mentoring process requires the Scheme Member to submit formal proposals to the SRB indicating a clear understanding of the issues which have led to the mentoring and offering well-defined proposals for ensuring that the issues do not recur. Formal proposals must be submitted within 15 working days of the mentoring meeting (see paragraph 13). The Scheme Member must subsequently attend a formal interview with a Review Panel to assess their understanding of the Scheme requirements.
10. The “Review Panel” shall consist of:
 - the Chair of the Scottish Registration Board “SRB Chair”, or a named deputy (Panel Chair)
 - the Lead Auditor from the audit that led to the suspension (or a deputy who is familiar with the details of the audit)
 - another member of the SRB.If the suspension is not as the result of an audit outcome, the Lead Auditor will be replaced by a member of the SRB who is familiar with the details of the concerns regarding the Scheme Member’s certification practice which have led to the Suspension with mentoring.
11. Subject to the approval of the Scheme member and the Mentor, observer(s) may be present at the mentoring session. Observer(s) should not influence or interfere with the conduct of the mentoring session.
12. A Scheme member may be represented at a Review Panel subject to the Scheme member giving at least 5 working day’s notice of the name and address of the representative. Whether the Scheme member chooses to be represented or not, their attendance at the Review Panel is mandatory.
13. Prior to the submission of the formal proposals, the Scheme Member shall be offered mentoring by an experienced member of the SRB. The Mentor is assigned by the Head of Certification with the agreement of the SRB Chair. Mentoring consists of a meeting between the Mentor and the Scheme Member at which the issues identified within the certification practice are reviewed. The Mentor will provide guidance in respect of the formal proposals. The meeting may be either in-person or online as agreed between the Mentor and Scheme Member. Before formal submission of the proposals, the Scheme Member may request that the Mentor reviews and makes comments on the draft proposals. The opportunity to request a review is limited to once only.
14. Following the mentoring meeting, the Mentor will produce a report of their findings. This report is provided directly to the SRB.
15. The Scheme Member may decline mentoring and instead submit formal proposals only, in which case the SRB and the SER Board shall be entitled to draw such inferences from the Scheme Member’s refusal as deemed appropriate in the circumstances.
16. Following receipt of the formal proposals, the SRB will consider:
 - the Scheme Member’s formal proposals
 - the Mentor’s report (subject to paragraph 15)
 - the findings from the audit/certification practice which led to the mentoring
 - the Scheme Member’s response to those findings
 - the Scheme Member’s membership and/or audit history

17. In the event that the SRB is **not** satisfied with the Scheme Member's formal proposals, it may, at its absolute discretion, provide feedback to the Scheme Member such that the Scheme Member may revise their proposals before the SRB's report and recommendations to the SER Board is finalised. The revised proposals must be submitted within 10 working days.

18. In the event that the SRB is satisfied that the Scheme Member understands the issues that led to mentoring and that a recurrence of such issues will be avoided on the implementation of the formal proposals, the following process will take place:

18.1 In the case of Active with mentoring:

The SRB's report and recommendation is submitted to the SER Board. In producing their report, the SRB will consider the items listed in paragraph 16 above including any revised proposals provided for in paragraph 17.

The SRB's recommendation to the SER Board can include one or more of the following:

- Conclude mentoring – return to Active status
- Suspension with further mentoring
- Terminate membership
- Monitoring of the Scheme Member's certification practice
- That further information and/or documentation be requested from the Scheme Member
- If the mentoring is following an audit outcome, a recommended timescale for the next audit

18.2 In the case of Suspended with mentoring:

The SRB will submit a report to the Review Panel having considered the items listed in paragraph 16 above including any revised proposals provided for in paragraph 17.

The Review Panel will be constituted according to paragraph 10 and an interview with the Scheme Member will be organised by SER staff.

Following the formal interview with the Review Panel, the Panel's report and recommendation is submitted to the SER Board. In producing its report, the Review Panel will consider the Scheme Member's responses during the interview along with all other information previously provided to the Panel.

The Review Panel's recommendation to the SER Board can include one or more of the following:

- Lift suspension – return to Active status
- Terminate membership
- Monitoring of the Scheme Member's certification practice
- That further information and/or documentation be requested from the Scheme Member
- If the mentoring is following an audit outcome, a recommended timescale for the next audit

19. On receipt of the SRB or Review Panel's report, the SER Board may:
 - reach a final decision
 - or request further information from the SRB and/or Review Panel before reaching a final decision.

20. The final decision of the SER Board may either be to support the recommendation of the SRB or may be any of those noted in paragraphs 18.1 or 18.2 above.

21. If either process is not concluded to the satisfaction of the SER Board within the required or reasonable timescales, membership of the Scheme may be suspended (if not already) or terminated.

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