respondent with the Responsible Official within 30 days of receipt of the letter of findings required by
§ 105–8.170–7.

(b) If a timely appeal without a request for hearing is filed by a party, any other party may file a written request for a hearing within the time limit specified in §105–8.170–9(a) or within 10 days of the date on which the first timely appeal without a request for hearing was filed, whichever is later.

(c) If no party requests a hearing, the Responsible Official shall promptly transmit the notice of appeal and investigative record to the Special Counsel for Ethics and Civil Rights.

(d) If neither party files an appeal within the time prescribed in §105–8.170–9(a) the Responsible Official shall certify, at the expiration of the time, that the letter of findings is the final agency decision on the complaint.

### § 105–8.170–10  Acceptance of appeals.

The Special Counsel shall accept and process any timely appeal. A party may appeal to the Deputy Administrator from a decision of the Special Counsel that an appeal is untimely. This appeal shall be filed within 15 days of receipt of the decision from the Special Counsel.

### § 105–8.170–11  Hearing.

(a) Upon a timely request for a hearing, the Special Counsel shall take the necessary action to obtain the services of an Administrative law judge (ALJ) to conduct the hearing. The ALJ shall issue a notice to all parties specifying the date, time, and place of the scheduled hearing. The hearing shall be commenced no earlier than 15 days after the notice is issued and no later than 60 days after the request for a hearing is filed, unless all parties agree to a different date, or there are other extenuating circumstances.

(b) The complainant and respondent shall be parties to the hearing. Any interested person or organization may petition to become a party or amicus curiae. The ALJ may, in his or her discretion, grant such a petition if, in his or her opinion, the petitioner has a legitimate interest in the proceedings and the participation will not unduly delay the outcome and may contribute materially to the proper disposition of the proceedings.

(c) The hearing, decision, and any administrative review thereof shall be conducted in conformity with 5 U.S.C. 554–557 (sections 5–8 of the Administrative Procedure Act). The ALJ shall have the duty to conduct a fair hearing, to take all necessary action to avoid delay, and to maintain order. He or she shall have all powers necessary to these ends, including (but not limited to) the power to—

(1) Arrange and change the date, time, and place of hearings and prehearing conferences and issue notices thereof;

(2) Hold conferences to settle, simplify, or determine the issue in a hearing, or to consider other matters that may aid in the expeditious disposition of the hearing;

(3) Require parties to state their position in writing with respect to the various issues in the hearing and to exchange such statements with all other parties;

(4) Examine witnesses and direct witnesses to testify;

(5) Receive, rule on, exclude, or limit evidence;

(6) Rule on procedural items pending before him or her; and

(7) Take any action permitted to the ALJ as authorized by this part, or by the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 551–559).

(d) Technical rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings conducted pursuant to §105–8.170–11, but rules or principles designed to assure production of credible evidence available and to subject testimony to cross-examination shall be applied by the ALJ whenever reasonably necessary. The ALJ may exclude irrelevant, immaterial, or unduly repetitious evidence. All documents and other evidence offered or taken for the record shall be open to examination by the parties and opportunity shall be given to refute facts and arguments advanced on either side of the issues. A transcript shall be made of the oral evidence except to the extent the substance thereof is stipulated for the record. All decisions shall be based upon the hearing record.