

Guidelines for Recognition of Professional Qualifications under Hong Kong Qualifications Framework

Introduction

1. The Education Bureau (EDB) introduced in September 2018 an initiative for eligible organisations to seek accreditation to become assessment agencies for issuing Professional Qualifications that are recognised under Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF).
2. “Professional Qualifications” refers to qualifications (other than mere membership status) granted by a bona fide local organisation to individuals who meet the requisite academic qualifications plus prescribed years of industry or professional experience and have passed through a robust assessment in written or practical format, not underpinned by an associated learning programme.

Target Applicants

3. Target applicants include the following types of bona fide local organisations, whether statutory or non-statutory, profit making or non-profit making¹:
 - *Professional bodies* which administer professional certifications for a discipline, or a profession, or an industry or a branch of an industry;
 - *Regulatory bodies* which issue licences through assessments, e.g. trade tests or licentiate examinations.

¹ Non-profit-making organisations refer to approved charitable institutions or trust of a public character exempt from tax under the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112).

Scope of Qualifications

4. Types of qualifications covered include:

- Professional qualifications;
- Occupation-based qualifications;
- Licence-related qualifications; and
- Trade tests.

Conditions for Application

5. An organisation applying to become an assessment agency for issuing Professional Qualifications should provide evidence to justify:

- It has close affiliation with an industry or a branch of the industry concerned;
- It has broad representation and support of an industry or a branch of the industry concerned, including employers, employees, relevant regulatory agencies, etc.;
- It has extensive membership coverage of practitioners in an industry or a branch of the industry concerned; and
- It makes significant contributions to an industry or a branch of the industry concerned.

Process of Application

6. The application process involves the following steps:

Step 1 - The applicant discusses its initial plan with the Qualifications Framework Secretariat (QFS).

Step 2 - The applicant submits a proposal to the EDB via QFS for initial screening. For non-statutory applicant organisations, an Assessment Panel made up of representatives of EDB, QFS and relevant experts may be set up to scrutinise the proposal as deemed necessary by EDB and QFS.

Step 3 - On the recommendation of the EDB/QFS or the Assessment Panel, the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) conducts an accreditation with the applicant to determine its suitability to be an assessment agency for issuing selected qualification(s).

Step 4 - Upon successful completion of the accreditation, the Secretary for Education will consider appointing the applicant as an assessment agency under the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance (Cap. 592), taking into consideration the accreditation result and the proposal submitted by the applicant.

- Upon appointment by the Secretary for Education as an assessment agency, the applicant will be able to issue qualifications recognised under the HKQF and registered in the Qualifications Register in the category of Professional Qualifications, to be distinguished from qualifications underpinned by a learning programme, and those issued under the Recognition of Prior Learning mechanism.
- If the assessment agency intends to include additional qualifications during the validity period, the assessment agency is required to go through the above application process.
- The assessment agency shall follow Steps 1 – 4 above on its re-accreditation plan before expiry of the validity period.

Accreditation fees

7. For the accreditation fees charged by HKCAAVQ, please refer to

the “Accreditation Related Policies and Fees” section in the HKCAAVQ website (www.hkcaavq.edu.hk) for details.

Financial support to successful applicant

8. Financial subsidy will be provided under the Designated Support Schemes for QF to the successful applicants on a reimbursement basis as follows:

- *non-profit making organisations* - 100% of the accreditation fees;
- *other organisations* - 50% of the accreditation fees.

Enquiries

9. For enquiries, please contact the QFS via the following means:

Telephone: 3793 3955

Facsimile: 3106 2035

Email: enquiry-aapq@hkqf.hk

*Qualifications Framework Secretariat
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