

Guidance Notes

Application for

Programme Development Grant for development of courses based on Specification of Competency Standards (SCS) / Specification of Generic Competencies (SGC) / Vocational Qualifications Pathway (VQP) under the Qualifications Framework Fund

Introduction

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (the Government) launched the Qualifications Framework (QF) to promote lifelong learning with a view to enhancing the capability and competitiveness of our local workforce. The QF is a seven-level hierarchy covering qualifications in the academic, vocational and professional as well as continuing education sectors.

2. A robust quality assurance mechanism is in place to benchmark and safeguard the quality of learning programmes (programmes) under the QF, mainly through accreditation by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ)¹.

3. The Qualifications Register (QR), established by the Government, is the public face of QF. All qualifications and programmes registered in the QR are quality assured and recognised under the QF.

4. The Education Bureau (EDB) established the QF Fund to support the sustainable development and implementation of the QF.

5. The Programme Development Grant for development of course(s) based on the Specification of Competency Standards ² (SCS-based course(s)) / Specification of Generic Competencies³ (SGC-based course(s)) (Development Grant) launched by EDB since January 2017 aims to provide incentive for providers to develop SCS-based / SGC-based course(s). The Development Grant is further enhanced starting from 1 September 2025 to extend the coverage to Vocational Qualifications Pathway (VQP)⁴ courses. Providers registered under the laws of Hong Kong are eligible to apply.

¹ The HKCAAVQ is responsible for the accreditation of learning programmes offered by non-self-accrediting institutions.

² The Specification of Competency Standards (SCS) are developed by the Industry Training Advisory Committees for the respective industries. For details of the SCS developed by industries, please refer to the QF website (www.hkqf.gov.hk).

³ The Specification of Generic Competencies (SGC), formerly named as Specification of Generic (Foundation) Competencies, are introduced by EDB as a complement to the industry-specific SCS. The competencies identified in the SGC are generic foundation skills required of practitioners to meet workplace requirements. For more details of the SGC, please refer to the QF website (www.hkqf.gov.hk).

⁴ Vocational Qualifications Pathway (VQP) is developed by the respective Industry Training Advisory Committees or professional body / licensing authority endorsed by EDB. Please visit QF website for details (www.hkqf.gov.hk).

Scope and Level of Subsidy

6. The Development Grant is available to providers in respect of their newly developed SCS-based / SGC-based / VQP course(s) which fulfill(s) the following criteria:

- (a) the course must be a new course developed in accordance with the prevailing Qualifications Guidelines ⁵ for SCS-based / SGC-based / VQP courses issued by EDB, which may be modified and updated from time to time;
- (b) the SCS-based / SGC-based / VQP course(s) must be successfully accredited by the relevant authority and registered in the QR; and
- (c) the SCS-based / SGC-based / VQP course(s) must be operated by the provider after successful accreditation.

7. The level of the Development Grant is as follows:

- (i) For SCS-based / SGC-based / VQP courses with the start date of validity period as indicated on the Statement of Accreditation Approval **on or after 1 September 2025**

QF credit [#]	Level of subsidies for the development of SCS-based / SGC-based / VQP courses
1 – 5 credits	\$10,000
6 – 11 credits	\$20,000
12 – 17 credits	\$30,000
18 – 35 credits	\$40,000
36 credits or more	\$50,000

[#] QF credit is a measurement of the size or volume of learning in a learning programme or a qualification recognised under the QF. When determining the subsidy level, SCS/SGC-based courses are determined by the total credit size of the course, while VQP courses are determined by the credit size of the VQP competency cluster(s) covered. Double recovery is not applicable for courses falling under more than one category.

⁵ The Qualifications Guidelines for SCS-based / SGC-based / VQP courses can be found on the QF website (www.hkqf.gov.hk).

- (ii) For SCS-based / SGC-based courses with the start date of validity period as indicated on the Statement of Accreditation Approval **before 1 September 2025** –

SCS-based Courses	SGC-based Courses
\$30,000 for a course with 12-35 QF credits	\$20,000 for a course with 6-17 QF credits
\$50,000 for a course with 36 QF credits or above	\$40,000 for a course with 18 QF credits or above

Application Procedures

8. Providers who wish to apply for the Development Grant should submit an application form (QFF-SCS/SGC/VQP) together with relevant supporting documents to EDB **no later than one year after the commencement of the course(s)**. If the courses involved in an accreditation exercise under application commenced in different times, providers can make individual applications for each course to ensure that an application is submitted no later than one year after the commencement of the course concerned.

9. Providers who apply for the Development Grant are required to provide information to prove the operation of the relevant SCS-based / SGC-based / VQP course(s). The supporting documents required are listed in the form (QFF-SCS/SGC/VQP).

10. Applicants who are non-self-accrediting operators developing SCS-based / SGC-based / VQP courses can apply for **both** the Development Grant and the Accreditation Grant for the Self-financing Programmes⁶ by filling in one application form (QFF-AG/DG) and submitting the supporting documents once. Applicants who are self-accrediting operators or who wish to submit individual application for the Development Grant should continue to complete the application form (QFF-SCS/SGC/VQP).

11. The application form (QFF-SCS/SGC/VQP or QFF-AG/DG) and supporting documents should be sent to Further Education Division of the Education Bureau on 7/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong.

12. A flow chart on the application procedures is set out at **Appendix** for ease of reference.

Processing of Application

13. Upon receipt of the application form and all relevant supporting documents from the applicant, EDB will process the application and may contact the applicant for clarification if necessary. Depending on the number of applications received and the number of accreditation exercises and / or SCS-based / SGC-based / VQP course(s) involved, payment is expected to be made to the successful

⁶ Please refer to the Guidance Notes – Application for Accreditation Grant for Self-financing Programmes provided on the QF website (www.hkqf.gov.hk).

applicant normally within four months from the date of receipt of all valid supporting documents with proper certification. To facilitate the processing of applications, applicants are advised to ensure that all valid supporting documents with proper certification are provided at the time of application.

Terms and Conditions

14. The Government reserves all rights to modify the above procedures at anytime considered necessary or appropriate by the Secretary for Education.

15. Providers who have received the Development Grant are required to indicate in all promotion and publicity materials that the accredited SCS-based / SGC-based / VQP course(s) are QF-recognised qualification(s). The QF logo ⁷ should also be shown. Providers are required to provide information on the operation of the relevant SCS-based / SGC-based / VQP course(s) upon request by EDB.

16. Providers are also required to undertake that they will abide by other terms and conditions which may be imposed by the Secretary for Education on the relevant QF-recognised qualification(s) and programme(s) concerned.

17. Since the Development Grant involves the use of public monies, applicants are obliged to ensure that the public monies disbursed to them are for the intended purposes in accordance with the provisions of the funding scheme. Wherever applicable, applicants should observe and comply with the Best Practice Checklist “Strengthening Integrity and Accountability – Government Funding Schemes Grantee’s Guidebook” published by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). The Guidebook can be accessed through ICAC’s website via http://www.icac.org.hk/filemanager/en/Content_1031/GranteeBPC.pdf

18. It is the constitutional duty for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to safeguard national security. Providers’ staff of all levels must effectively prevent and suppress any act or activity endangering national security. Providers should exercise their professional judgement, maintain a high degree of sensitivity and prudently assess any potential national security risks or issues that may be involved in every stage of the procurement. To this end, providers should incorporate the following specific clauses into the quotation/tender documents to allow disqualification of a supplier and to terminate the contract in the interest of national security:

(a) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the quotation/tender documents, providers reserve the right to disqualify a supplier on the grounds that the supplier has engaged, is engaging, or is reasonably believed to have engaged or be engaging in acts or activities that are likely to cause or constitute the occurrence of offences endangering national security or otherwise the exclusion is necessary in the interest of national security, or is necessary to protect the public interest of Hong Kong, public morals, public order or public safety.

(b) Providers may immediately terminate the contract upon the occurrence of any of the following events:

⁷ For details on the use of the QF logo, please refer to the Guideline for the Use of QF Logo in the QR website (https://www.hkqr.gov.hk/HKQRPRD/export/sites/default/.content/attachment/en/Guidelines-for-the-Use-of-the-QF-Logo_en.pdf).

- (i) the contractor has engaged or is engaging in acts or activities that are likely to cause or constitute the occurrence of offences endangering national security or which would otherwise be contrary to the interest of national security;
- (ii) the continued engagement of the contractor or the continued performance of the contract is contrary to the interest of national security; or
- (iii) the providers reasonably believe that any of the events mentioned above is about to occur.

Enquiries

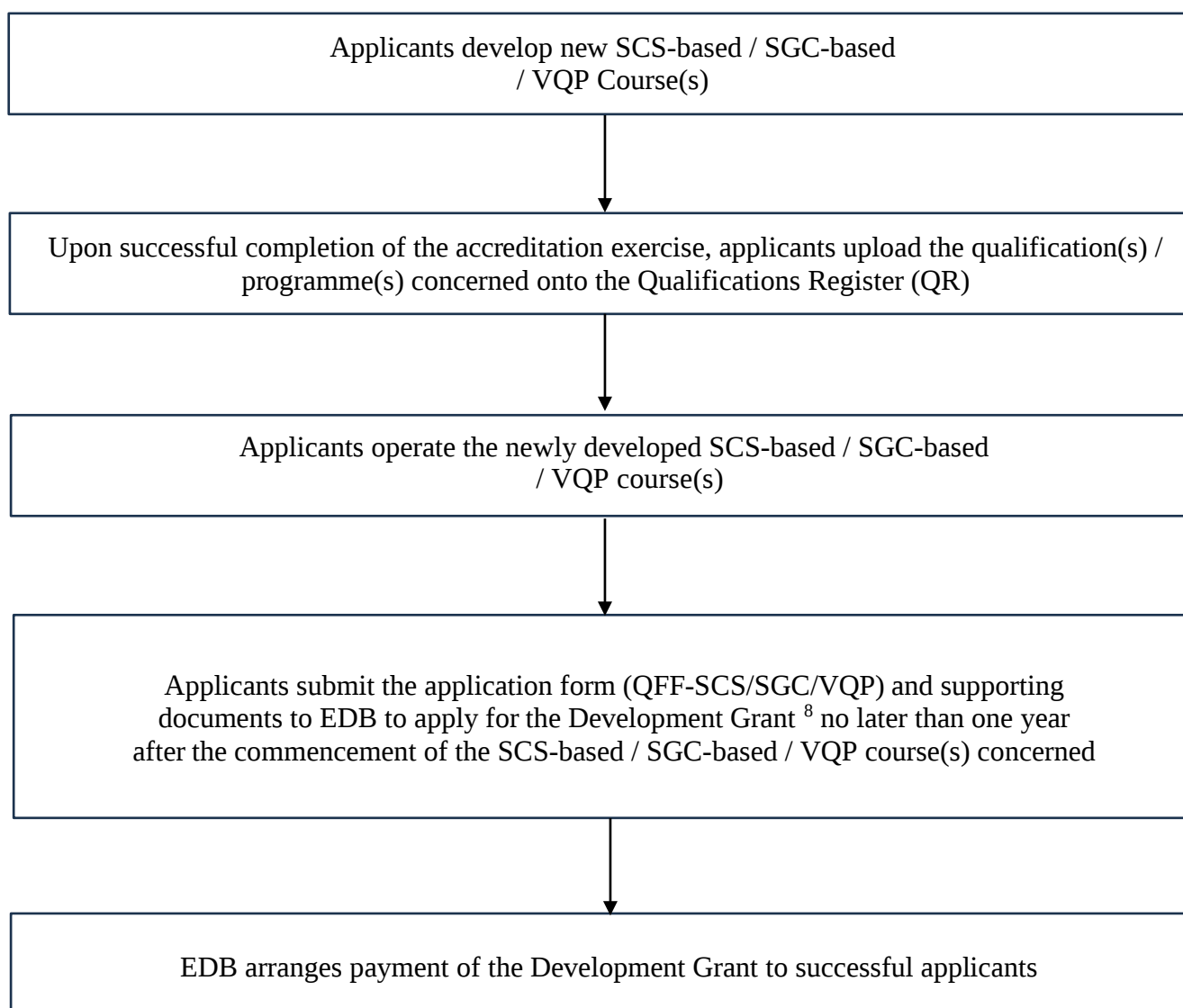
19. Providers may address enquiries to Further Education Division, Education Bureau on 7/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong (Telephone number: 3509 7425, Fax number: 2899 2967).

20. The application form can be downloaded from the QF website (www.hkqf.gov.hk).

Education Bureau
September 2025

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Specification of Competency Standards (SCS) /
Specification of Generic Competencies (SGC) / the
Vocational Qualifications Pathway (VQP)**

Application Procedures



⁸ Applicants who are non-self-accrediting operators developing SCS-based / SGC-based / VQP courses can apply for **both** the Accreditation Grant and the Programme Development Grant for development of courses based on SCS/SGC/VQP (the Development Grant) by filling in one application form (QFF-AG/DG) and submitting the supporting documents once. Applicants who are self-accrediting operators or who wish to submit individual application for the Development Grant should continue to complete the application form (QFF-SCS/SGC/VQP) for the purpose of applying for the Development Grant.