

Guidance Notes

Application for Accreditation Grant for Self-financing Programmes 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 the QF. All qualifications and programmes registered in the QR are quality assured and recognised under QF.
4. The Education Bureau (EDB) established the QF Fund to support the sustainable development and implementation of the QF.
5. Providers may apply for the Accreditation Grant for Self-financing Programmes (the Accreditation Grant²) which covers the fees charged by the HKCAAVQ for various types of accreditation services provided, including Initial Evaluation (IE), Institutional Review (IR)³, Learning Programme Accreditation (LPA) and Learning Programme Re-accreditation (Re-LPA)⁴. Providers registered under the laws of Hong Kong are eligible to apply.

Scope and Level of Subsidy

6. The Accreditation Grant is available to providers to meet the accreditation fees of the institutions / organisations and their self-financing programmes⁵. It is available to both local and non-local programmes⁶. Applications for the Accreditation Grant should be made **no later than one year**

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

² With effect from 1 September 2025, the Accreditation Grant covers the **review fees for applied degree programmes as well as the accreditation fees for Vocational Qualifications Pathway (VQP) courses**.

³ With effect from 1 September 2025, apart from the service fees for (i) IR for registration under the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320), (ii) IR for private university title and (iii) IR for university of applied sciences (UAS), the Accreditation Grant also covers the **paper-based review fees for self-financing arms of University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions / publicly-funded institutions to undergo IR for registration under the amended Cap. 320**.

⁴ IE, IR, LPA and Re-LPA are different stages of accreditation process conducted by HKCAAVQ. For details, please refer to the website of the HKCAAVQ (www.hkcaavq.edu.hk).

⁵ Self-financing programmes refer to programmes other than publicly-funded programmes offered by the eight institutions funded by the UGC, Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Vocational Training Council and Prince Philip Dental Hospital.

⁶ Non-local programmes refer to programmes registered or exempted from registration under the Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance (Cap. 493).

after the issuance of the relevant Statement of Accreditation Approval (SOA) by HKCAAVQ. The level of the Accreditation Grant is shown below:

Type of accreditation services		Level of Subsidy (% of accreditation fee)	
		Non-profit-making providers ⁷	Other providers
Initial Evaluation (IE) / Institutional Review (IR) Fees ⁸		100%	50%
Learning Programme Accreditation (LPA) / Learning Programme Re-accreditation (re-LPA) Fees	Courses developed based on the Specification of Competency Standards (SCS-based courses) / Specification of Generic Competencies ⁹ (SGC-based courses) and Vocational Qualifications Pathway (VQP) courses ¹⁰	100%	50%
	Other programmes	70%	35%
Review Fees for Applied Degree Programmes		70%	35%

Application Procedures

7. The Accreditation Grant is available on reimbursement basis. Providers who wish to apply for the Accreditation Grant should follow the procedures below:

- approach HKCAAVQ for accreditation services (for details of the procedures, please refer to the website of the HKCAAVQ (www.hkcaavq.edu.hk);
- settle payment for accreditation fees as required by the HKCAAVQ;
- upload the qualifications and the relevant programmes onto the QR after successful accreditation¹¹; and
- submit an application form (QFF-AG/DG) together with relevant supporting documents to EDB to apply for reimbursement of the relevant accreditation fees. The supporting documents required are listed in the form (QFF-AG/DG).

⁷ Non-profit-making providers refer to approved charitable institutions or trust of a public character exempt from tax under the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112). Other evidence submitted may not be accepted. Non-local partners of non-local programmes must submit evidence to substantiate their non-profit-making status in the countries concerned.

⁸ With effect from 1 September 2025, the Accreditation Grant covers (i) IR for registration under the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320); (ii) IR for private university title; (iii) IR for university of applied sciences (UAS); and (iv) paper-based review for self-financing arms of UGC-funded institutions / publicly-funded institutions to undergo IR for registration under the amended Cap. 320.

⁹ Formerly named as Specification of Generic (Foundation) Competencies.

¹⁰ Please refer to the Qualifications Guidelines for the development of SCS-based / SGC-based / VQP courses provided on the QF website (www.hkqf.gov.hk).

¹¹ For this purpose, successful accreditation includes approval given by the HKCAAVQ for operation of the programme without pre-conditions, or approval with pre-conditions which have been satisfactorily fulfilled. Where it is considered necessary, the provider will be required to seek confirmation from the HKCAAVQ on the result of the accreditation exercise.

8. Applicants who are non-self-accrediting operators developing SCS-based / SGC-based courses / 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)¹² 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.
9. The application form (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, Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong.
10. Applications for the Accreditation Grant in respect of non-local programmes must be submitted by the local operator(s) of the programmes with confirmation by the non-local institution(s) concerned. Application submitted by other parties will **NOT** be accepted.
11. To promote wider awareness and transparency of QF in Hong Kong, education and training providers are encouraged to feature key elements of QF in the certificates¹³ awarded to graduates of learning programmes that have been accredited under QF and are within the validity period. The key elements include the QF logo, the QF level of the learning programme and its registration number on the QR. For programme having all three key elements featured in the certificate, the applicant should provide copy of the sample certificate as supporting document to EDB.
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 learning programmes involved, payment is expected to be made to the successful 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.

¹² Please refer to the Guidance Notes – Application for Programme Development Grant for development of courses based on SCS / SGC / VQP provided on the QF website (www.hkqf.gov.hk).

¹³ For details on the featuring of QF in certificates, please refer to the Guideline for Featuring QF in Certificates in the QR website (https://www.hkqr.gov.hk/HKQRPRD/export/sites/default/.content/attachment/en/Guideline_Featuring_QF_in_Certificates_en.pdf).

15. Providers who have received the Accreditation Grant are required to indicate in all promotion and publicity materials that the relevant qualification(s) and programme(s) accredited by HKCAAVQ are QF-recognised. The QF logo¹⁴ should also be shown. Providers may be required to provide information on the operation of the relevant programme(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 Accreditation 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:
 - (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.

¹⁴ For details on the use of QF logo, please refer to the Guideline for the use of 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).

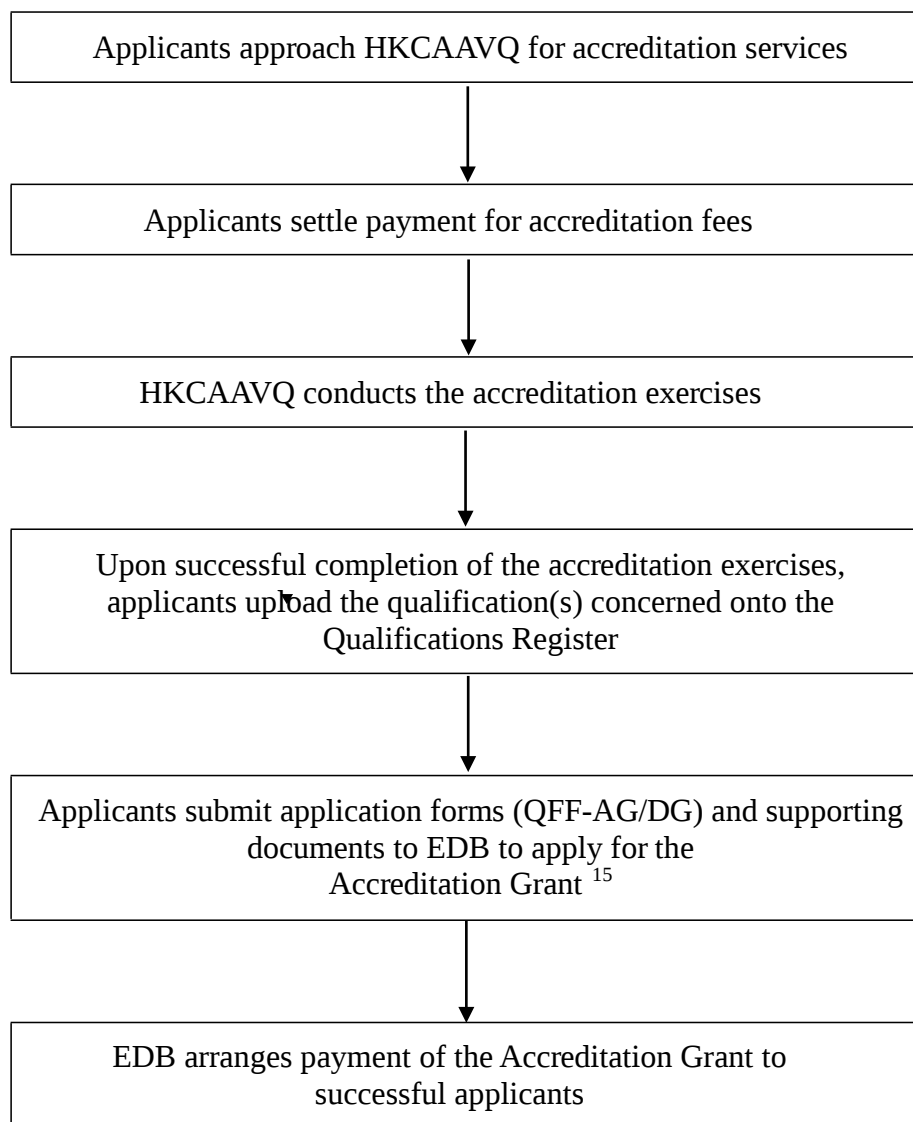
Enquiries

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
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Accreditation Grant for Self-financing Programmes

Application Procedures



¹⁵ Applicants who are non-self-accrediting operators developing SCS-based or SGC-based courses or 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.