

## Validity Application Form Manual

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## 1 Introduction to the European and Dutch Qualifications Frameworks

Linking the levels of national qualification frameworks (NQFs) to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) enables comparison of the qualification levels of various countries. The descriptors of the eight levels in the EQF serve as a reference for all qualifications, regardless of how they are being offered. This opportunity to compare qualification levels contributes to transparency between the education systems of EU countries and promotes lifelong learning.

The Dutch Qualifications Framework (NLQF) which has been developed in the Netherlands consists of eight levels and an entry level. Further information on EQF and NLQF is available at [www.nlqf.nl](http://www.nlqf.nl)

*A provider of a non-government regulated qualification may apply to the National Coordination Point NLQF (hereafter NCP NLQF) for classification of a qualification on the NLQF. Classification comprises two steps as follows:*

### **Step 1**

*An organisation is assessed in terms of its eligibility for a classification request by means of a validity test. The validity test precedes the procedure of classification of a qualification at an NLQF level. This validity test is repeated once every six years.*

### **Step 2**

*Once the validity of an organisation has been positively assessed, the organisation may submit an application for classification for a period of six years, for one or more qualifications. A separate application must be filed for each qualification for which classification is being applied.*

What are the benefits of getting a qualification classified on the Dutch Qualifications Framework?

As a provider, classification may be used as a means of:

- comparing levels of qualifications in terms of learning outcomes with similar qualifications offered by other providers;
- thinking in terms of learning outcomes as a building block for qualifications;
- simplifying communication with the labour market.

This manual is intended to help an organisation formulate an application for assessment of its validity to determine whether it is eligible to make an application for classification of a qualification (Step 1). The NCP NLQF carries out the audit which addresses the following elements:

- legal personality
- right of ownership of the qualification
- sustainability of the organisation
- assessment
- quality assurance

## 2 Costs of the validity test

- If an organisation employs one of the externally validated quality assurance systems indicated below, validity is assessed based on the application form submitted. The cost of this limited validity test is EUR 1,000 excl. VAT.
- If an organisation's quality assurance is arranged differently, an institutional audit is added to the validity test based on the application form.

The cost of this extended validity test is EUR 7,500 excl. VAT.

The externally validated quality assurance systems eligible for the limited validity test are:

- Accredited by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) [Nederlands Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie];
- Supervised by the Dutch Inspectorate of Education [Inspectie van het Onderwijs];
- ISO 9001:2008/2015;
- INK model (with external audit);
- Supervision by the Stichting Examenkamer

### 3 Writing up the application form

An application for demonstrating the validity of an organisation is assessed based on the information and documentation provided. In assessing an application, the NCP NLQF determines the extent to which the criteria of legal personality; right to ownership of the qualification; sustainability of the organisation; assessment; and quality assurance, are verified by the answers to the questions on the application form and the supporting documentation provided. An organisation making an application should remember that the NCP NLQF does not know that organisation.

### 4 Procedure

1. An application to the NCP NLQF is made using a completed Validity Application Form. The guidance provided in this Validity Application Form Manual must be followed when completing the Validity Application Form.
2. The NCP NLQF checks whether documentation provided is complete. Where an application is found to be incomplete, an organisation will be notified.
3. The NCP NLQF determines whether an application is valid and forwards the application to the Quality Committee of the NCP NLQF.

An organisation receives confirmation that an application has been received and is being processed. Within two weeks of that confirmation, the applicant organisation is sent an invoice for EUR 1,000 excl. VAT, in the case of a limited validity test, or EUR 7,500 excl. VAT, in the case of an extended validity test.

4. In the case of an extended validity test, the procedure is extended by the following elements:
  - a. *the Quality Committee assesses the application and draws up the points identified for attention and the questions that will have to be addressed during the institutional audit. These points for attention and questions are forwarded to the auditor (content) and secretary (process) of the NCP NLQF together with the application form and accompanying documentation. They will carry out the institutional audit;*
  - b. *the auditor and secretary of the NCP NLQF inform the applicant of the topics to be addressed during the institutional audit;*
  - c. *the auditor and secretary of the NCP NLQF visit the applicant for a half-day to one day;*
  - d. *the auditor and secretary of the NCP NLQF report the conclusions of the institutional audit to the Quality Committee.*

5. The Quality Committee formulates its advice on the organisation's validity on the basis of the application and the documentation provided (and in the case of the extended validity test, supplemented by the institutional audit report) to the Programme Council.
6. The Programme Council of the NCP NLQF determines whether the organisation's validity is confirmed or rejected. Rejection is always accompanied by a clarification. The applicant may file an appeal against the decision of the NCP NLQF with the Appeal Committee.
7. The NCP NLQF informs the organisation of the Programme Council's decision.
8. After the Programme Council has confirmed an organisation's validity, the organisation may submit a qualification for a NLQF classification request. An organisation's validity remains valid for six years. It has no independent value and no rights can be derived from it.

## 5 What information is an organisation required to provide?

An organisation submits an application by completing the Validity Application Form. This form may be downloaded at NCP NLQF website [www.nlqf.nl](http://www.nlqf.nl)

Each section of the Validity Application Form is clarified below.

### 5.1 Institution Details

State the name of the organisation and the contact person with contact details.

### 5.2 Qualification Details

State the qualification (s) that the organisation seeks to classify and whether this qualification has already been offered. If so, indicate starting date. Add a copy of the diploma attached to the qualification for which classification is being sought.

### 5.3 Organisational Overview

The NCP NLQF does not know the organisation submitting the application. Therefore, the applicant is asked to provide a brief overview of the organisation. The overview should contain the following elements:

- Size of the organisation: number of employees (all types) and number of participants catered per annum;
- Type of activities carried out by the organisation;
- Current activities of the organisation;
- Organisational structure (An organisational chart of the organisation should be included).

### 5.4 Verification of the validity of the organisation

The assessment determining whether an organisation is eligible for classification at an NLQF/ EQF level focuses on the following criteria: legal personality; right to ownership of the qualification; sustainability of the organisation; assessment; and quality assurance.

In the 'Answer and verification' column, an explanation of how the organisation addresses the questions posed under each one of the five criteria should be provided. Where documentation is included, it should be referred to by number in the column 'Demonstrated by....'.

All five sections must be assessed positively for a provider to be eligible to submit an application for classification of a qualification at one of the NLQF levels and the EQF associated level(s). The assessment is conclusive, meaning the answer is either 'eligible' or 'not eligible'.

*A. Legal personality*

State the legal personality applicable to your organisation. Substantiate the legal personality by providing proof, e.g. a recent copy of a Chamber of Commerce registration.

*B. Right to ownership of the qualification*

An application for classification may only be made by parties that have ownership of and/or are responsible for, the qualification being submitted for classification. Therefore, it is necessary to indicate the entity which has responsibility for and/or ownership of, the qualification being submitted for classification and whether any other institutions are authorised to offer the qualification. Verification should be backed up by documentation demonstrating that the applicant organisation is the owner of/responsible party for (e.g., supplier), the qualification or that the applicant organisation is authorised by the owner/supplier of the qualification to make the application.

*C. Sustainability of the organisation*

For an organisation to receive a positive validity assessment so that it can apply for classification of one or more qualification, the organisation is required to prove its sustainability. Substantiate in the application form how you meet the criteria by answering the following questions for each criteria:

1. *What activities are being executed to realise this?*
2. *What are the results of these activities?*
3. *How does this affect the various stakeholders?*

Keep your answers as concrete as you can and refer to relevant documentation where possible.

*D. Assessment*

The assessments and the way they are conducted must meet several requirements. This involves external monitoring of the qualifying assessments / certificates and of the person(s) conducting them.

Verify in the application form how the criteria are met by answering the following questions for each criterion:

1. *What activities are carried out to achieve this criterion?*
2. *What are the results of these activities?*
3. *How does this affect the various stakeholders?*

Answers should be as concrete as possible and should refer to relevant documentation where possible.

*E. Quality Assurance*

To be eligible to submit an application for classification of a qualification, the quality of the organisation must be assured.

How the quality assurance criteria are met should be verified by answering the following questions for each criterion:

1. *What activities are carried out to achieve this criterion?*
2. *What are the results of these activities?*
3. *How does this affect the various stakeholders?*

Answers should be as concrete as possible and should refer to relevant documentation where possible.

## 6 How to submit the application

The application must be submitted both digitally and in writing (in triplicate).

It is necessary to number and reference any supplements added to the Validity Application Form. Number the supplements at the main level (1, 2, 3, etc.) and not at a sub level (not: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, etc.).

Example:

Supplement 1. Organisational Chart

Supplement 2. Chamber of Commerce Registration

Supplement 3. Establishment papers

Add these attachments and a table of contents to your completed application form. Check the application form and the attached supporting documents for completeness using the validity checklist.

We request that you submit your application in triplicate no later than 10 days before the date of the meeting of the Quality Commission.

Please submit the application (including supplements) in triplicate to:

NCP NLQF  
Postbus 1585  
5200 BP 's-Hertogenbosch

In addition, please send the application digitally (in Word) to [info@ncpnlqf.nl](mailto:info@ncpnlqf.nl)