

## Classification Application Form Manual

## Index

<b>1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2 Application for classification of a qualification .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Perspective to be used when describing the application.....	4
2.2 Best-fit method .....	4
2.3 What information needs to be supplied? .....	5
2.4 Procedure .....	7
<b>Appendix 1: NLQF levels.....</b>	<b>8</b>

## 1 Introduction

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) and in the brochures that can be downloaded there under 'Downloads'.

The requirements of the learning outcomes at each level are formulated based on descriptors. The requirements for each descriptor become increasingly complex / high level moving from the Entry Level to Level 8.

<b>EQF Descriptors</b>	<b>NLQF Descriptors</b>
Context	Context
Knowledge	Knowledge
Skills	Knowledge application
	Problem-solving skills
	Learning and development skills
	Information skills
	Communication skills
Competence	Responsibility and autonomy

This manual is intended to provide guidance for the formulation of an application for classification of a qualification on the NLQF / EQF.

## 2 Application for classification of a qualification

### 2.1 Perspective to be used when describing the application

When applying for classification, choose an NLQF level. The application for classification of a qualification on the NLQF is assessed based on the information and documentation provided.

In assessing an application, the NCP NLQF determines to what degree the knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy described in the learning outcomes of the qualification, fit the NLQF level applied for. In addition, it is important to demonstrate how qualification testing at the chosen level is arranged and how the qualifying assessment and the learning outcomes described are aligned with one another. In writing an application, be aware that the NCP NLQF is not familiar with the educational and testing practice and the learning processes that the candidate experiences.

### 2.2 Best-fit method

As described above, the types of qualifications available in The Netherlands are grouped into eight NLQF levels and an entry level. Based on learning outcomes, both general and professional qualifications may be classified at the same level.

In assessing an application, the NCP NLQF applies the 'best fit' method. In the best fit method, all descriptors are reviewed and the level that best fits the whole of the qualification is determined. Together the descriptors determine the level of the qualification.

Descriptors belonging to different levels may apply to the same qualification. For example: a qualification may be at Level 5 in terms of problem-solving skills while the knowledge level remains at Level 4.

Eventually, the assessments per descriptor are joined into a verdict about the level of the entire qualification.

#### **Descriptors:**

Context (is not weighted in)

Knowledge

Skills

- Knowledge application
- Problem-solving skills
- Learning and development skills
- Information skills
- Communication skills

Responsibility and autonomy

### 2.3 What information needs to be supplied?

The Classification Application Form should be used to make an application. This form can be downloaded from the NCP NLQF website: <http://www.nlqf.nl>. Each section of the Classification Application Form is explained below.

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

State:

- The exact name of the qualification as (it will be) stated on the degree or certificate;
- Whether the qualification is already being offered and, if so, since when. This refers to the question of whether or not degrees / certificates of this qualification have already been issued;
- The NLQF level applied for;
- The educational programme(s) leading to qualification;
- The sector/industry involved.

Choose the level for which to apply.

After successful classification into the requested level, the NCP NLQF's Registry will state the qualification under the name provided in the application.

#### A) Descriptors

Apart from the applicant's documentation, the descriptions of the descriptors for each level of the NLQF and the EQF should also be used. These contain the requirements per descriptor and per level as described in the NLQF and EQF. These descriptions are part of this manual.

Ultimately, it is the applicant who decides the level at which classification is sought for a qualification, based on all the levels at which the individual descriptors arrive.

For verification, relevant documentation that reflects the contents of the qualification should be used. This could include attainment targets, testing criteria, course material and assessments.

Verify as specifically as possible:

- i) the learning outcomes of the qualification in relation to each descriptor; as many aspects of the descriptor as possible should be included in the verification;
- ii) the level considered applicable to each descriptor (based on the descriptions of the descriptors).

The verification should be concrete, clear and concise. The NCP NLQF must be able to use the description to determine how the content and level of the descriptor are explained and how the learning outcomes are being tested. For clarification purposes, an example may be used and / or reference may also be made to the documentation provided. In doing so, it is necessary to be specific, e.g. state the title of the document referenced and the location (including page number) where the additional information can be found.

#### B) Learning effort/labor market relevance

As a prerequisite for a qualification to be classified into one of the levels of NLQF is that the qualification is substantial: requiring a minimum learning effort of 400 hours or if this is not the case the qualification should be labor market relevant .

When requesting the classification of a qualification you need to demonstrate either the 400 hours learning effort or the labor market relevance.

*- learning effort*

A learning effort can consist of various types of learning activities. How the various learning activities are distributed over the learning hours should be described.

When assessing a request for classification, the NCP NLQF examines the whole of the various learning activities and how they are distributed. Examples of learning activities are a combination of self-learning, internships, learning on the job and/or with intervision ( inter-collegial learning method) and coaching. Prior work experience and previous education or courses are not considered and do not add up the total of learning hours. The learning effort needs to reflect the time needed to acquire the knowledge, skills, independence and autonomy of the qualification that is the subject of the classification request. The total number of hours of the learning effort should be determined by the time an average student would need for completing the entire programme of the qualification.

*- labour market relevance*

A qualification is considered to be labor market relevant if the following requirements are met:

1) it is clear towards which jobs, occupations and / or professions the qualification is directed to.

In this case the application needs to demonstrate that:

- the qualification offers the student extra opportunities in the labor market (like increased employability and/or greater labor market mobility).
- the student will have easier access to the labor market in general and / or specific professions or jobs.
- It offers the student internal mobility opportunities within a company or organisation.
- the student meets the requirements for exercising a profession (for example in law or health insurance enterprises).

And:

2) the qualification is developed by the relevant professional field for example by the professional or branch organisation or a representative group of companies or organisations.

C) Assessment

- Describe the assessment methods in terms of knowledge and skills and responsibility and autonomy and the assessment tools used to test this;
- Demonstrate that the qualification is being assessed by means of qualifying assessment and how the qualifying assessment and the description of learning outcomes are consistent with one another;
- Support the verification with documents on the assessment approach. In any case, provide a copy of the degree or certificate.

The NCP NLQF requires the following information:

- What does the assessments cover? This includes knowledge, skills and responsibility and autonomy in relation to the level being applied for;
- What types of assessments are applied? The NCP NLQF assesses to what extent the knowledge, skills and competences match the level and the assessment type involved.

A test matrix with a cover ratio (i.e., the number of learning outcomes that will be assessed) and a general description of the testing and assessment types involved may be included. Explanations may be illustrated with examples and supplements.

## 2.4 Procedure

- 1 Apply to the NCP NLQF for NLQF classification using the completed Classification Application Form<sup>1</sup>. This Classification Application Form Manual<sup>2</sup> provides guidance and information on how to formulate learning outcomes and on the verification of the NLQF level.

The application (including supplements) in triplicate should be sent to:

NCP NLQF  
Postbus 1585  
5200 BP 's-Hertogenbosch

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

- 2 The NLP NLQF checks the completeness of the documentation provided. If the application is not complete, an applicant will be notified and given 14 days to supply the missing documentation.
- 3 If the file is complete, the NCP NLQF proceeds to assess the application's eligibility. If proven eligible, it is forwarded to a team of two experts.  
  
The applicant will receive confirmation of receipt, stating that the application is being processed and identifying the experts assigned to the case. Within 2 weeks of receiving the confirmation of receipt, the applicant will receive an invoice for EUR 2,500 excl. VAT per qualification.
- 4 A team of two independent experts assesses the application and documentation provided, and drafts a report verifying whether the qualification meets the requested level. This report is forwarded to the Classification Committee of the NCP NLQF.
- 5 Based on the application, the documentation provided and the experts' report, the Classification Committee formulates its advice to the Programme Council concerning the classification level of the qualification applied for.
- 6 The decision on classification of a qualification at a specific NLQF level depends on the NCP NLQF Programme Council. If the applicant disagrees with the Programme Council's decision, s/he may appeal the NCP NLQF's decision to the Appeals Committee.
- 7 In the case of a positive result, meaning that the level is granted, the classified qualification is registered in the NCP NLQF register which is available on [www.nlqf.nl](http://www.nlqf.nl)
- 8 The applicant receives the NLQF logo with the level that is granted for the qualification and the NLQF level may be stated on the degrees issued by the applicant.

---

<sup>1</sup> To be found under 'Downloads' at [www.nlqf.nl](http://www.nlqf.nl)

<sup>2</sup> Also to be found under 'Downloads' at [www.nlqf.nl](http://www.nlqf.nl)

## Appendix 1: NLQF levels

### Entry level

<b>Context</b>	A familiar, stable living and working environment
<b>Knowledge</b>	Possesses basic knowledge of simple facts and ideas related to the living environment
<b>Skills:</b>	
Application of knowledge	Reproduces knowledge and applies it
	Executes simple identifiable (professional) tasks automatically
Problem-solving skills	Recognises simple problems in everyday life
	Solves problems
Learning and development skills	Develops under the guidance of someone else
Information skills	Obtains and processes information about simple facts and ideas associated with the living environment
Communication skills	Communicates with peers on the basis of conventions that apply to that context
Responsibility and autonomy	Works together with peers
	With guidance, has a limited level of responsibility for results of simple routine tasks and study.

### Level 1

#### NLQF

<b>Context</b>	A discernible living and working environment
<b>Knowledge</b>	Possesses basic knowledge of simple facts and ideas related to a profession and knowledge domain
<b>Skills:</b>	
Knowledge application	Reproduces and applies knowledge



	Executes simple discernible (professional) tasks based on automatic processes.
Problem-solving skills	Recognises simple problems in professional practice and in the knowledge domain
	Solves these problems
Learning and development skills	Develops under guidance of someone else
Information skills	Obtains and processes information about simple facts and ideas associated with a profession and knowledge domain
Communication skills	Communicates with peers, superiors and clients based on conventions that apply to the context and professional practice
Responsibility and autonomy	Works together with peers, supervisors and clients
	With guidance, carries responsibility for results of simple routine tasks and study

## EQF

<b>Knowledge</b>	General basic knowledge
<b>Skills</b>	Required basic skills to execute simple tasks
<b>Responsibility and autonomy</b>	Working or studying under direct supervision in a structured context

## Level 2

### NLQF

<b>Context</b>	A discernible living and working environment
<b>Knowledge</b>	Possesses basic knowledge of facts, ideas, processes, materials, resources and concepts of and associated with, a profession and knowledge domain
<b>Skills:</b>	
Knowledge application	Reproduces and applies knowledge
	Executes simple (professional) tasks using selected standard procedures
Problem-solving skills	Recognises simple problems in professional practice and in the knowledge domain

Learning and development skills	Asks for support in further development after reflection and assessment of own (learning) results
Information skills	Obtains and processes basic information about facts, ideas, processes, materials, resources and concepts of and associated with a profession and knowledge domain
Communication skills	Communicates with peers, superiors and clients based on conventions that apply to the context and professional practice.
Responsibility and autonomy	Works together with peers, superiors and clients
	Carries responsibility for results of simple tasks and study

### EQF

<b>Knowledge</b>	Basic knowledge of facts of a professional or educational domain
<b>Skills</b>	Required cognitive and practical basic skills for using relevant information to execute tasks and solve routine problems using simple rules and resources
<b>Responsibility and autonomy</b>	Working or studying under supervision with some independence

### Level 3

#### NLQF

<b>Context</b>	A discernible, varied living and working environment
<b>Knowledge</b>	Possesses knowledge of materials, resources, facts, core concepts, simple theories, ideas, methods and processes of and associated with, a profession and knowledge domain
<b>Skills:</b>	
Knowledge application	Reproduces and applies knowledge
	Identifies limitations of existing knowledge in professional practice and in the knowledge domain and takes action

	Executes (professional) tasks that require tactical and strategic insight based on own preference and a combination of standard procedures and methods
Problem solving skills	Identifies complex problems in professional practice and the knowledge domain
	Solves them systematically by identifying and using data
Learning and development skills	Asks for support in further development after reflection and assessment of own (learning) results
Information skills	Obtains, processes and combines information about materials, resources, facts, core concepts, simple theories, ideas, methods and processes of and associated with a profession and knowledge domain
Communication skills	Communicates with peers, superiors and clients based on conventions that apply to the context and professional practice
Responsibility and autonomy	Works together with peers, superiors and clients
	Carries responsibility for results of a defined set of tasks and study

## EQF

<b>Knowledge</b>	Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts of a professional or educational domain
<b>Skills</b>	A range of required cognitive and practical skills to execute tasks and solve problems by choice and application of basic methods, resources, materials and information
<b>Responsibility and autonomy</b>	Takes responsibility by completing tasks in the professional or study domain. In solving problems, adapts own behaviour to circumstances

## Level 4

### NLQF

<b>Context</b>	A discernible, varied living and working environment, also international
<b>Knowledge</b>	Possesses broad and specialist knowledge of materials, resources, facts, abstract concepts, theories, ideas, methods and processes of and associated with a profession and knowledge domain
<b>Skills:</b>	
Knowledge application	Reproduces, analyses and applies knowledge
	Evaluates and integrates data and develops strategies for the execution of various (professional) tasks
	Identifies limitations of existing knowledge in professional practice and in the knowledge domain and takes action
	Analyses fairly complex (professional) tasks and executes them
Problem-solving skills	Recognises and analyses fairly complex problems in professional practice and the knowledge domain
	Solves them systematically and creatively by identifying and using data
	Learning and development skills
	Develops by reflection and assessment of own (learning) results
Information skills	Obtains, processes and combines broad and specialist information about materials, resources, facts, abstract concepts, theories, ideas, methods and processes of and related to a profession and knowledge domain
Communication skills	Communicates with peers, superiors and clients based on conventions that apply to the context and professional practice
Responsibility and autonomy	Works together with peers, superiors and clients
	Carries responsibility for results of own activities, work and study

	Carries partial responsibility for the results of the work of others
--	--

## EQF

<b>Knowledge</b>	Factual knowledge and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts of a professional or educational domain
<b>Skills</b>	A broad range of required cognitive and practical skills to solve specific problems in a professional or educational domain
<b>Responsibility and autonomy</b>	Self-management within the guidelines of professional or educational contexts that are usually predictable but may be subject to change
	Supervise routine tasks of others and take a certain degree of responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of professional or educational activities

## Level 5

### NLQF

<b>Context</b>	An unfamiliar, varied living and working environment, also international
<b>Knowledge</b>	Possesses extensive, in-depth or specialist knowledge of a profession and knowledge domain
	Possesses detailed knowledge of some professional and knowledge domains and an understanding of a limited range of basic theories, principles and concepts
	Possesses limited knowledge and understanding of some important current topics and specialisms associated with the profession and knowledge domain
<b>Skills:</b>	
Knowledge application	Reproduces and analyses knowledge and applies it, also in other contexts, to provide an answer to

	problems related to a profession and knowledge domain
	Uses procedures in a flexible and inventive way
	Identifies limitations of existing knowledge in the professional practice and in the knowledge domain and takes action
	Analyses complex (professional) tasks and executes them
Problem-solving skills	Recognises and analyses complex problems in professional practice and in the knowledge domain and solves them creatively by identifying and using data
Learning and development skills	Develops through reflection and assessment of own (learning) results
Information skills	Obtains, processes, combines and analyses broad, in-depth and detailed information about a limited range of basic theories, principles and concepts of and associated with, a profession and knowledge domain, as well as limited information about some important current topics and specialisms associated with the professional and knowledge domain, and conveys this information
Communication skills	Focused communication with peers, superiors and clients based on conventions that apply in the context and professional practice.
Responsibility and autonomy	Works together with peers, superiors and clients
	Carries responsibility for results of own activities, work and study
	Carries partial responsibility for the results of activities and work of others and for managing processes

## EQF

<b>Knowledge</b>	Broad, specialist factual and theoretical knowledge within a professional or educational domain and awareness of the limitations of that knowledge
------------------	--

<b>Skills</b>	A broad range of required cognitive and practical skills for elaborating creative solutions to abstract problems
<b>Responsibility and autonomy</b>	Provide management and supervision in contexts of professional or educational activities where unpredictable changes may occur
	Critical view on and improvement of own and others' performance

## Level 6

### NLQF

<b>Context</b>	An unfamiliar, varied living and working environment, also international
<b>Knowledge</b>	Possesses advanced specialist knowledge and critical insight into theories and principles of a profession, knowledge domain and broad scientific area
<b>Skills:</b>	
Knowledge application	Reproduces and analyses knowledge and applies it, also in other contexts, in such a way that it demonstrates a professional and scientific approach in both professional and knowledge domain
	Applies complex specialist skills to the results of research
	With guidance, successfully completes practical research using methodological knowledge
	Creates and puts depth into argumentations. Critically evaluates and combines knowledge and insights from a specific domain
	Identifies limitations of existing knowledge in professional practice and in the knowledge domain and takes action
	Analyses complex professional and scientific tasks and executes them
Problem-solving skills	Recognises and analyses complex problems in professional practice and in the knowledge

	domain and solves them in a tactical, strategic and creative way by identifying and using data
Learning and development skills	Develops by self-reflection and self-assessment of own (learning) results
Information skills	Collects and analyses broad, in-depth and detailed professional or scientific information in a responsible, critical way, about a limited range of basic theories, principles and concepts of and associated with a profession or knowledge domain, as well as limited information about some important current topics and specialisms associated with the profession and knowledge domain and conveys this information
Communication skills	Focused communication with peers, specialists, non-specialists, superiors and clients based on conventions that apply in the context and professional practice.
Responsibilities and autonomy	Works together with peers, specialists and non-specialists, superiors and clients
	Carries responsibility for results of own work and study and the result of the work of others
	Carries partial responsibility for management of processes and professional development of persons and groups
	Collects and interprets relevant data to form an opinion that is based on the assessment of relevant social, professional, scientific or ethical elements

## EQF

<b>Knowledge</b>	Advanced knowledge of a working or educational domain, implying critical insight into theories and principles
<b>Skills</b>	Advanced skills demonstrating absolute craftsmanship an innovative capacity in solving complex and unpredictable problems in a specialist professional or educational domain
<b>Responsibilities and autonomy</b>	Managing complex technical or professional activities or projects; take responsibility to take



	decisions in unpredictable professional or educational contexts
	Take responsibility to manage the professional development of persons and groups

## Level 7

<b>Context</b>	An unfamiliar, varied living and working environment with a high degree of uncertainty, also international
<b>Knowledge</b>	Possesses exceptionally specialised and advanced knowledge of a profession, knowledge domain and scientific area and on the crossroad between various professions, knowledge domains and scientific areas
	Possesses a critical understanding of a range of theories, principles and concepts, including the primary ones associated with a profession, knowledge domain and scientific area
	Possesses extensive, detailed knowledge and critical understanding of some important current topics and specialisms associated with the profession or knowledge domain and scientific areas
<b>Skills:</b>	
Knowledge application	Reproduces, analyses, integrates and applies knowledge, also in other contexts and handles complex matter
	This knowledge shapes the foundation for original ideas and research
	Uses the knowledge obtained at a higher abstraction level. Thinks conceptually. Creates and deepens argumentation
	Uses methodological knowledge to succeed independently at fundamental research
	Provides an original contribution to the development and application of ideas, often in a research context
	Identifies limitation of existing knowledge in professional practice and in the knowledge

	domain on the crossroad between various professional practices and knowledge domains and takes action. Analyses complex professional and scientific tasks and executes them
Problem-solving skills	Recognises and analyses complex problems in professional practice and in the knowledge domain and solves them in a tactical, strategic and creative way
	Contributes in the professional practice and in the knowledge domain to the (scientific) solution of complex problems by identifying and using data
Learning and development skills	Develops independently for the most part
Information skills	Collects and analyses broad, in-depth and detailed scientific information about a range of theories, principles and concepts of and associated with, a profession or knowledge domain in a responsible, critical way, as well as information about some important current topics and specialisms associated with the profession and knowledge domain and conveys this information
Communication skills	Focused communication with peers, specialists, non-specialists, superiors and clients based on conventions that apply to the context and professional practice
Responsibility and autonomy	Works together with specialists and non-specialists, peers, superiors and clients
	Carries responsibility for results of own work and study and the result of the work of others
	Carries responsibility for managing complex processes and the professional development of persons and groups
	Formulates assessments based on incomplete or limited information and takes social, scientific and ethical responsibilities associated with the application of the own knowledge and assessment into account

<b>Knowledge</b>	Very specialist knowledge that is partially highly advanced in a professional or educational area, as a basis for original ideas and/or research
	Critical awareness of knowledge problems in a profession and on the crossroad between various professions
<b>Skills</b>	Specialised skills in problem solving, that are required in the context of research and/or innovation for the development of new knowledge and procedures and integration of knowledge from various fields of expertise
<b>Responsibility and autonomy</b>	Managing and transforming complex and unpredictable professional or educational contexts that require new strategic approaches
	Taking responsibility for contributing to the professional knowledge and working methods and/or to critically evaluate the strategic performance of teams

## Level 8

### NLQF

<b>Context</b>	An unfamiliar, varied living and working environment with a high degree of uncertainty, also international
<b>Knowledge</b>	Possesses the most advanced knowledge possible in a profession, knowledge domain and scientific area and on the crossroad between various professions, knowledge domains and scientific areas.
	Possesses knowledge obtained by personal research or work, leading to an important contribution to the development of the professional and scientific area
	Possesses critical insight into a professional and scientific area including a critical understanding of the primary and current theories, principles and concepts
<b>Skills:</b>	

Knowledge application	Reproduces, analyses and integrates the knowledge in an authoritative manner and applies this, also in other contexts and handles complex matter. This knowledge forms the basis of original ideas and research
	Uses the knowledge obtained at a higher abstraction level. Thinks conceptually. Creates and deepens argumentation
	Independently completes complex fundamental research based on methodological knowledge successfully
	Helps re-define the limits of knowledge by delivering original research encompassing a substantial body of work, in part deserving of national or international assessed publication
	Identifies limitations of existing knowledge in professional practice and in the knowledge domain on the crossroad between various professional practices and knowledge domains and takes action. Analyses complex professional and scientific tasks and executes them
Problem-solving skills	Recognises and analyses complex problems in professional practice and in the knowledge domain and solves them in a tactical, strategic and creative way
	Contributes in the professional practice and in the knowledge domain to the (scientific) solution of complex problems by identifying and using data
Learning and development skills	Largely develops independently and achieves technical, social or structural progress in society
Information skills	Collects and analyses broad, in-depth and detailed scientific information about a range of theories, principles and concepts of and associated with, a profession or knowledge domain in a responsible, critical manner, as well as information about some important current topics and specialisms associated with the professional and knowledge domain and conveys this information

Communication skills	Focuses communication with peers, specialists, non-specialists, superiors, clients and the broad scientific community and society as a whole based on conventions that apply in the context and professional practice
Responsibilities and autonomy	Works together with peers, specialists, non-specialists, superiors, clients and the broader scientific community and society as a whole
	Carries responsibility for results of own work and study and for the results of the work of others
	Carries responsibility for managing complex processes and the professional development of persons and groups
	Employs scientific integrity to design, develop, execute and apply a complex fundamental research process.

## EQF

<b>Knowledge</b>	The most advanced knowledge in a professional or educational area and on the crossroad between various fields of expertise
<b>Skills</b>	The most advanced and specialist skills and techniques, and evaluation skills/techniques required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and expanding and re-defining existing knowledge or professional working methods
<b>Responsibility and autonomy</b>	Demonstrate a great deal of authority, innovation, autonomy, scientific and professional integrity and continuous involvement in the development of ground-breaking ideas or processes for professional or educational contexts, including research