

Guidance Notes

Application for Grant for Programme Area Accreditation 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 the 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 Grant for Programme Area Accreditation (PAA Grant) to cover the fees for Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) and Periodic Institutional Review (PIR)² exercises conducted by the HKCAAVQ. Providers³ registered under the laws of Hong Kong are eligible to apply.

Scope and Level of Subsidy

6. The PAA Grant is available to providers who have successfully completed the accreditation exercises of the PAA or PIR. Applications for the PAA Grant should be made **no later than one year after the issuance of the relevant Statement of Accreditation Approval** by HKCAAVQ. The level of the PAA Grant is shown below:

Scope	Level of Subsidy (% of accreditation fee)	
	Non-profit-making providers ⁴	Other providers
PAA / PIR fees	70%	35%

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

² PAA and PIR are different stages of the accreditation process conducted by the HKCAAVQ. For details, please refer to the website of the HKCAAVQ (www.hkcaavq.edu.hk).

³ With effective from **1 September 2025**, the PAA Grant covers the review on granting of PAA status for self-financing arms of University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions under the amended Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320).

⁴ 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.

Application Procedures

7. The PAA Grant is available on reimbursement basis. Providers who wish to apply for the PAA Grant should submit application form (QFF-PAA) with relevant supporting documents to EDB upon successful completion of the accreditation exercises. The supporting documents required are listed in the application form (QFF-PAA).
8. The application form (QFF-PAA) 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.
9. 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 certificates⁵ 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.
10. A flow chart on the application procedures is set out at **Appendix** for ease of reference.

Processing of Application

11. 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 relevant supporting documents with proper certification are provided at the time of application.

Terms and Conditions

12. The Government reserves all rights to modify the above procedures at anytime considered necessary or appropriate by the Secretary for Education.
13. Providers who have received the PAA Grant are required to indicate in all promotion and publicity materials that the relevant qualifications and programmes covered by the PAA are QF-recognised. The QF logo⁶ should also be shown. Providers may be required to provide information on the operation of the relevant programmes upon request by EDB.

⁵ For details on the featuring of QF in certificates, please refer to the “Guideline for Featuring QF in Certificates” on QR website

(https://www.hkqr.gov.hk/HKQRPRD/export/sites/default/.content/attachment/en/Guideline_Featuring_QF_in_Certificates_en.pdf).

⁶ 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).

14. 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.

15. Since the PAA 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.

16. 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.

Enquiries

17. 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).

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

Grant for Programme Area Accreditation

Application Procedures

