香港學術及職業資歷評審局
Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of
Academic & Vocational Qualifications

Guidance Notes on Upload of Records by Operators with Programme Area Accreditation Status on QR

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All correspondences should be addressed to Head and Registrar, QFQR, HKCAAVQ.

Executive Summary

Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) is the third stage of the Four-stage Quality Assurance Process to ascertain whether an Operator is competent to quality assure its learning programme(s) within a programme area up to a certain HKQF level. Upon obtaining a PAA status, an Operator may develop and operate learning programme(s) within the approved scope without going through Learning Programme Accreditation (LPA) and Re-accreditation (re-LPA) by HKCAAVQ, and enter the relevant qualification(s), within the validity period of the PAA status, into the Qualifications Register (QR).

To ensure accuracy and consistency of information on the QR, HKCAAVQ conducts vetting of the QR records uploaded by Operators with PAA status, making reference to the information accessed through the "programme / qualification information (web-link)" and / or relevant checklists pertinent to the programme / qualification.

This set of Guidance Notes is to provide up-to-date information about the various issues arising from the different natures of a qualification in uploading onto the QR. Operators with PAA status need to pay attention to and take necessary action in response to the advice given in the Notes. In case of questions, Operators may contact the QFQR unit of HKCAAVQ for clarification.

Section 1
Introduction

HKCAAVQ conducts vetting of the QR records uploaded by Operators with PAA Status [1] making reference to information accessed through the "programme / qualification information (web-link)" and / or through the CAT web-link for vetting of CAT arrangements (i.e. CAT (Programme) [CAT (P)], CAT (Recognition of Prior Learning Qualifications) [CAT (R)], or CAT (Institutional) [CAT(I)]) for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) where applicable. Therefore it is essential that Operators provide all the required information to HKCAAVQ either through the web-link(s) or in a format that is readily accessible if the programme / CAT websites are still under construction at the time of upload.

1.1 This set of Guidance Notes sets out advice on the approaches to uploading various types of QR records under specific circumstances including the following:

(a) Uploading quality assured local learning programmes under Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) status on the QR;

(b) Uploading learning programmes / qualifications on the QR with Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) arrangements [i.e. CAT (P), CAT (R) or CAT (I)] in place;

(c) Collaborative Programmes in collaboration with local non-self-accrediting Operators on the QR;

(d) Making changes to published QR records, including change in the CAT information on the QR;

(e) Learning programmes in compliance with the Award Titles Scheme (ATS) and Use of QF Credit (Credit) under the QF implemented by the Education Bureau (EDB); and

(f) Uploading learning programmes / qualifications of particular natures [i.e. with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) arrangement, with third party approval, or meeting the definition of Online Learning Programme (OLP)] on the QR.

1.2 To facilitate the timely listing of qualifications and changes on the QR, three proformas and three templates are available to be used by Operators with Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) Status. These will serve as a vetting reference and inform HKCAAVQ of the status of both new and existing QR records before the records are being uploaded on the QR. The information in the proformas / templates shall be provided to and agreed by HKCAAVQ before the relevant learning programmes / qualifications and changes are uploaded on the QR.

Section 2
Upload of Quality Assured Learning Programmes on QR

2.1 Qualifications that may be entered into the QR are described in Schedule 3 of the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance (AAVQO) (Cap. 592). An Operator with Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) status may develop qualifications and enter them into the QR after they have been quality assured by the Operator concerned. To this end, a proforma "Checklist on the Key Features for New Quality Assured Learning Programmes on the QR by Operators with Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) Status" (*New Programme Checklist*) *is* available for Operators with PAA status to assure HKCAAVQ of the status of the quality assured programmes. This applies to all new programmes on the QR under PAA. Key features of quality assured learning programmes include the following:

(a)   The learning programme should carry an award (i.e. a qualification) as a formal recognition of the completion of the learning programme;

(b)   The learning programme should include formal assessment(s) to ascertain that the learners have achieved the specified outcomes of the learning programme;

(c)   The learning programme should be level-rated in accordance with the Generic Level Descriptors of the Qualifications Framework (QF);

(d)   The learning programme should carry its award title in accordance with the ATS under the QF (please find details of the ATS in the QF website www.hkqf.gov.hk);

(e)   The learning programme should indicate its QF credit size (please find details of the QF Credit in the QF website www.hkqf.gov.hk);

(f)   The learning programme should be accessible to learners of Hong Kong; and

(g)   The learning programme has Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) [2] arrangements [i.e. CAT (Institutional), CAT (Programme) or CAT (Recognition of Prior Learning Qualifications)] in place.

2.2   As a general rule, a programme registered on the QR should have the majority parts of the programme delivered in Hong Kong and the assessment of the learning programme conducted in Hong Kong. This general rule should be adhered to as far as possible.

Implementation of QF Credit on QR

2.3   All learning programmes at QF Levels 1 to 4 have been assigned QF credit on QR since 1 January 2016. The implementation plan of QF credit indication for learning programmes at QF Levels 5 to 7 offered by non-self-accrediting Operators is as follows:

(a)   With effect from 1 September 2020, all newly registered programmes at QF Levels 5 to 7, except for research-based programmes, are to indicate QF credit on the QR.

(b)   With effect from 1 September 2022, all programmes at QF Levels 5 to 7, except for research-based programmes, are to indicate QF credit on the QR.

Section 3
Requirements on Presenting QR Data by the Education Bureau

Requirement on Presenting Different Delivery / Funding Modes of the Same Learning Programme in One QR Record

3.1   Different delivery / funding modes of the same learning programme are to be presented in one QR record. If a QR record has already covered the full-time and part-time delivery modes of a learning programme, duplicated QR

records to be uploaded for the same delivery modes should normally be rejected.

3.2 For duplicated QR records listed before 1 July 2017, they may continue to be listed on the QR until expiry of respective registration validity period. Yet, further renewal of these records is not allowed. The differences in delivery / funding modes should be clearly stated in the Special Notes of relevant QR records such that the public can differentiate between the duplicated records and make an informed choice in choosing a learning programme that suits an individual's need.

Upload of Qualifications with the Same Titles of Learning Programmes or Qualifications

3.3 For greater clarity of information presented on the QR, Operators are encouraged to state in the Special Notes the relationship of the same group of QR records with the same programme and/or qualification titles but of different programme structures.

Section 4
Upload of Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) Arrangements on QR

4.1 On a voluntary basis, the Operator with PAA status is to inform the QFQR by indicating on the "Checklist for New or Existing Learning Programmes with Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) arrangement on the QR by Operators with Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) Status" *(CAT Arrangement Checklist)* that the new or existing learning programme has in place CAT arrangements that are CAT (I) [3], CAT (P) [3] or CAT (R) [3] and provide a web-link from the institution's website containing relevant details applicable or specific to that learning programme. General CAT information, Specific CAT information, and the Credit Transfer Arrangement Details are required to provide where applicable.

4.2 To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data provided, the display of CAT information and Credit Transfer Arrangements on the QR are to operate on the following overarching working principles and processes:

(a)   CAT data are additional information under each QR record;

(b)   CAT data on the QR are inter-related and an integral part of the quality assurance process of the respective institution (the participation in the indication of CAT on the QR is voluntary);

(c)   Only information from the receiving institutions is to be used for QR listing including that related to Credit Transfer Arrangements / Agreements;

(d)   The receiving institution is to ensure that all sending qualifications have been quality assured under the quality assurance arrangements of the receiving institution and are being QF-recognised.

(e)   CAT data can include other forms of learning (e.g. Informal Learning / Non-formal Learning) by including CAT arrangements for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) qualifications as sending qualifications;

(f)   Like the other data provided by Operators on the QR, it should be the onus of the Operators to keep the CAT data accurate and current; and

(g)   The updating of the CAT data is to be performed by Operators with PAA status on an annual and needs basis, subject to QR vetting.

4.3 The indication of CAT arrangements on the QR applies to both new and existing learning programmes. HKCAAVQ enhances the implementation measures of the indication of CAT information on the QR as follows:

Indication of CAT (P) / CAT (R) Arrangements with Sending Qualifications on QR from Receiving Programmes

4.4 Only information from the receiving institutions is to be used for QR listing including that related to Credit Transfer Arrangement;

4.5 Upon the launch of the CAT centralised database on QR in October 2018, new or existing learning programmes with CAT indication will need to complete the *CAT Arrangement Checklist*. For learning programmes with indication of CAT (I), CAT(P) or CAT(R), the following information has to be provided:

(a) Type of Credit Accumulation and Transfer;
(b) CAT Info (web-link for CAT);
(c) General CAT Information (either English or Chinese); and
(d) Specific CAT information (either English or Chinese),
where (d) is an optional field.

4.6 For receiving programmes with indication of CAT (P) and/or CAT (R), in addition to the above fields in 4.5, more information about the **Credit Transfer Arrangement of Sending Qualification / Institution** is required to be provided. This part contains the basic CAT information of the QR registered sending qualifications for each receiving programme, showing the Credit Transfer Arrangement information from the sending qualifications to the receiving programmes. Each receiving programme can indicate a maximum of 30 sending qualifications, which will be expanded to 150 qualifications starting from October 2019. The information of sending qualification(s) to be provided by the receiving institution includes:

(a) Types of Credit Accumulation and Transfer;
(b) QR Registration Number of the Sending Qualification;
(c) Within Institution or not;
(d) Maximum Percentage of Transfer; and
(e) Types of Courses Eligible for Credit Transfer (either English or Chinese),
where (d) and (e) are optional fields.

4.7 Any changes (i.e. addition, amendment, deletion) to CAT information made to an existing programme with CAT arrangement are required to report to QFQR by using the *CAT Arrangement Checklist.* Please refer to the Explanatory Notes for QR Database Structure (Applicable to Learning Programme-based Qualifications) for each field in 4.5 and 4.6.

Section 5
Upload of Collaborative Programmes in Collaboration with Local Non-Self-Accrediting Operators on QR

5.1 The Operator with PAA status is to provide the following information about collaborative programmes in collaboration with local non-self-accrediting Operators, by using the proforma "Declaration Statement for the Upload of Collaborative Programmes on the QR by Operators with PAA Status"

(Declaration Statement):

(a)   The nature of collaboration of the associated learning programme with the local non-self-accrediting Operator;

(b)   The institution responsible for conducting the quality assurance of the associated learning programme; and

(c)   The granting body of the qualification.

Section 6
Types of Action Codes on QR

6.1   The use of action codes (e.g. A, C, T, E and D) in the QR Upload Excel Template (provided by HKCAAVQ) is to inform the system of the intended purpose of the uploaded / submitted QR entry (i.e. to add a new entry, change, erase or discontinue an existing entry).   The five action codes used for the uploading / updating of QR records are:

(a)   "**A**" is the action code to upload a new QR record or CAT information.

(b)   "**C**" is the action code to modify the content (other than the Operator/ Agency Reference Code) of a published QR record, e.g. registration validity period, keywords, and special notes, etc. In addition, **"C"** action code is used to modify content in the two CAT information spreadsheets, e.g. addition of and/or change in CAT web-link, CAT information, and/or Credit Transfer Arrangement, etc.

(c)   "**T**" is the action code to modify the "Operator / Agency Reference Code" of a published QR record <u>only</u>.

(d)   "**E**" is the action code to erase the CAT information contained in the two CAT information spreadsheets "Published QR CAT info" or "Published QR Credit Transfer Arrangement" <u>only</u>.

(e)   "**D**" is the action code to abridge the registration validity period of a published QR record <u>only</u> where no other change will be allowed.

Section 7
Change in Operator / Agency Reference Code on QR

7.1 For a change in the reference code, please follow the process below:

(a) The Operator / Agency Reference Code has to be <u>unique</u> within each intended action in the uploaded / submitted QR entry (i.e. to add a new entry, change or discontinue an existing entry). For each reference code, the system allows only a <u>single</u> occurrence under an Operator, and the attempt to create a QR entry with a duplicated reference code will be blocked.

(b) To facilitate the vetting process by the QFQR, Operators are requested to provide details of the code change by using the summary template *"QR - Summary Template for Code Change" (Code Change Template)*.

(c) Operators can amend the Operator / Agency Reference Code of a published record, using the <u>Interactive Mode</u> of the QR system or the <u>QR Upload Excel Template</u>.

Section 8
Change in Title of a Learning Programme or Qualification

8.1 For a change in the title(s), please follow the process below:

(a) Except for error correction or minor updating, the learning programme / qualification bearing the new title shall be uploaded as a <u>new</u> record on the QR.

(b) To make a title change, the validity period of the old record on the QR shall be abridged. The qualification with the revised title shall then be assigned a new Operator / Agency Reference Code and be uploaded as a new record onto the QR. The validity period end date of the abridged record shall be one day prior to the start date of the new record. This ensures the continuity of the QF-recognition status of the learning programme / qualification.

(c) Special Notes briefly stating the title change and the effective date shall be included on both the old and the newly uploaded records. A new QR

Registration Number will be automatically generated by the QR system to the new record for identification.

(d) Operators are requested to provide details of the title change by using the summary template *"QR – Summary Template for Title Change" (Title Change Template)* as the basis for vetting by the QFQR.

Section 9
Change in QF Level of a Learning Programme

9.1 For a change in the QF Level, please follow the process below:

(a) For learning programmes / qualifications that require a change in the QF level, the old record on the QR will be abridged.   The qualification with the revised QF level and new Operator / Agency Reference Code will then be uploaded as a new record onto the QR.   The validity period end date of the abridged record shall be one day prior to the start date of the new record. This ensures the continuity of learning programme / qualification recognition status under the QF.

(b) Special Notes briefly stating the QF level change and the effective date shall be included on both the old and the newly uploaded records. A new QR Registration Number will be automatically generated by the QR system to the new record for identification.

Section 10
Change in SCS-based or SGC-based [4] Status

10.1 For a change in Specification of Competency Standards (SCS)-based or the Specification of Generic (Foundation) Competencies (SGC)-based [4] Status of a learning programme, please follow the process below:

(a) For learning programmes that require a change in the SCS-based or SGC-based status (e.g. from Non-SCS-based to SCS-based, or from Non-SGC-based to SGC-based), the old record on the QR will be abridged. The qualification with the revised status and new Operator / Agency Reference Code will then be uploaded as a new record onto the QR.   The

validity period end date of the abridged record shall be one day prior to the start date of the new record. This ensures the continuity of learning programme / qualification recognition status under the QF.

(b) Special Notes briefly stating the change in SCS-based / SGC-based status and the effective date shall be included on both the old and the newly uploaded records. A new QR Registration Number will be automatically generated by the QR system to the new record for identification.

(c) As the basis for vetting by the QFQR, Operators are requested to provide details of the change in the SCS-based / SGC-based status by using the summary template *"QR - Summary Template for SGC SCS-based courses"* *(SGC / SCS Status Change Template)*.

Requirements on Indication of UoC Table for SCS-based / SGC-based Courses on the QR

10.2 Effective from <u>1 November 2018</u>, the indication of UoC table will be compulsory for listing SCS-based / SGC-based courses on the QR. This also applies to changes to existing SCS-based / SGC-based courses that require a new QR record (for example, courses with a change in title of learning programme / qualification).

Section 11
Change from a Non-Vocational Qualifications Pathway (VQP) 5 Course to a VQP Course

11.1 For a change from a non-VQP course to a VQP course, please follow the process below:

(a) For learning programmes / qualifications that require a change from non-VQP to VQP, the old record on the QR will be abridged. The VQP course and new Operator / Agency Reference Code will then be uploaded as a new record onto the QR. The validity period end date of the abridged record shall be one day prior to the start date of the new record. This ensures the continuity of learning programme / qualification recognition status under the QF.

(b) Programme requirements briefly stating the relevant industry developed under VQP and the effective date shall be included in both the old and the newly uploaded records. A new QR Registration Number will be automatically generated by the QR system to the new record for identification. For all VQP courses, the requirement on the indication of UoC table on the QR will apply.

Section 12
Upload of Learning Programmes on the QR with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Arrangement

12.1 HKCAAVQ has been appointed by the Insurance Authority as the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Assessment Authority. A mechanism has been put in place to recognise Insurance Learning Programmes and Insurance-Related Learning Programmes (IRPLs) accredited under the Qualifications Framework (QF) as Qualified CPD Activities. This aims to encourage insurance practitioners to fulfill the CPD requirements by studying QF-accredited Learning Programmes.

12.2 QF accredited learning programmes categorised under the insurance industry on the QR will be directly recognised as Type 3 Qualified CPD Activities. QF accredited learning programmes NOT categorised under the insurance industry on the QR can be recognised as Type 4 qualified CPD activities if they are approved by HKCAAVQ after going through a vetting procedure. For details of the vetting service of recognising QF-accredited IRPLs as Type 4 Qualified CPD Activities, please refer to the HKCAAVQ website: https://www.hkcaavq.edu.hk/en/services/assessment/cpd-ia-programmes.

Section 13
Requirement on Indication of Industry and Branch on QR

13.1 "Industry [7]" and "Branch [7]" are two essential and inter-related data fields with a search facility on the QR, and are of particular relevance to vocational and professional qualifications and their associated learning programmes.

13.2 To promulgate further the relevant information on "Industry" and "Branch"

with an aim to enhance the usability of the QR as an information source for quality assured qualifications under the QF, effective from 1 July 2017, all learning programmes, including both existing and new, are required to indicate the relevant industries and branches on the QR as far as practicable.

13.3 To address the requirement of such an indication on the QR, a two-pronged approach is adopted. For SCS-based courses, the indication of both the industry(ies) and the branch(es) remains to be compulsory. As for the non-SCS-based learning programmes, the indication of branch(es) is optional even when industry(ies) is/are specified.

Section 14
Upload of Learning Programmes on the QR with Third Party Approval

14.1 For upload of learning programmes with third party approval, the Operator with PAA status should obtain the approval from the responsible professional bodies or relevant authorities (if applicable) prior to uploading the concerned programme on QR. Before uploading the programme, relevant documentary proof of approval has to be provided together with the *New Programme Checklist*. The following four types of programmes require proof of third party approval for uploading on QR:

(a) Early childhood related programmes require Qualified Kindergarten Teacher (QKT) approval from the EDB and approval from Social Welfare Department (SWD) as Training Course of Child Care Workers and Child Care Supervisors;

(b) Nursing related programmes require approval from The Nursing Council of Hong Kong as a nursing qualification for the purpose of registration as registered nurse;

(c) Elderly care related programmes require approval from Social Welfare Department as Health Worker Training Course; and

(d) Social work related programmes require approval from Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) as a social work qualification for the purpose of registration as registered social worker.

Section 15

Upload of Online Learning Programmes (OLP) on the QR

15.1 Online Learning Programme (OLP) refers to a programme delivered through a digital learning platform to provide structured teaching, learning and assessment, and the programme has more than 50% of instruction delivered online.

15.2 For upload of an OLP, please follow the process below:

(a) The Operator with PAA status can upload an OLP within its PAA scope on the QR upon completion of its internal QA process and subject to QR vetting. The OLP should be assigned with a new Operator / Agency Reference Code and be uploaded as a new record on QR.

(b) Special Notes stating the online nature of the programme shall be included in the new record. A new QR Registration Number will be automatically generated by the QR system to the new record for identification upon its QR listing.

Note [1]:   Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) is conferred on programme providers with sufficient quality assurance competency and maturity at the organisational level and a good track record in delivery of their validated programme(s). Upon gaining PAA status, a provider may develop and operate learning programmes within an approved scope of programme area(s) at specified QF Level(s) for an approved period of time (validity period), and have the qualifications of its learning programmes entered into the QR for QF recognition without going through Learning Programme Accreditation (LPA) or Re-accreditation (re-LPA) by HKCAAVQ.

Note [2]:   Please find details of the Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) under the QF in the HKQF website www.hkqf.gov.hk.

Note [3]:   Credit Accumulation and Transfer (Institutional) - The Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) arrangements are in place at an institutional level that apply across a cognate group of learning programmes offered by the institution.

Credit Accumulation and Transfer (Programme) - The Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) arrangements are in place at the programme level for specific learning programme(s). These programme specific CAT arrangements should

be underpinned by CAT arrangements at the institutional level.

CAT (Recognition of Prior Learning Qualifications) - The CAT arrangements are in place at the programme level for specific learning programme(s). These programme specific CAT arrangements are based on the RPL qualifications obtained by the learners through the RPL mechanism under the Qualifications Framework (QF) and should be underpinned by CAT arrangements at the institutional level.

Note [4]: Please find details of the Specification of Generic (Foundation) Competencies-based Courses under the QF in the HKQF website at www.hkqf.gov.hk.

Note [5]: Please find details of Vocational Qualifications Pathway Courses under the QF in the HKQF website at www.hkqf.gov.hk.

Note [6]: QF-accredited Insurance-Related Learning Programmes are those with at least 50% of course content falling within the areas of coverage specified under the CPD Information Sheet issued by the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance.

Note [7]: The "Industry" in the QR has been grouped making reference to the various Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) established by the EDB under the QF, where "Branch" refers to the major divisional functional area(s) within an industry. For details, please visit the QF website at www.hkqf.gov.hk.

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