

PQProfile – Guidance Document

Purpose

The purpose of the **PQProfile** is to establish the essential information required to facilitate the allocation of credit, if possible, and articulation for individuals who have completed professional training programmes. In this context, professional training programmes generally lead to qualifications that sit outside of the traditional education structure. A lack of information about the qualification and a lack of European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits are frequently cited as reasons why credential evaluators and higher education institutions (HEIs) cannot assess these types of qualifications. Thus the **PQProfile** may assist in determining whether to accept a student for further studies, or to exempt the student from certain credits which are deemed to have already been covered by the professional programme.

The **PQProfile** will normally be completed on the request of an applicant who is either applying to access a programme of study, or applying for credit exemption from all or part of a programme of study on the basis of their professional qualification.

Professional training programmes that can be submitted for consideration for ECTS credit exemption via the **PQProfile** are programmes leading to qualifications that are outside the formal education system, where the provider can supply information on:

- clear indicators of average workload;
- learning outcomes and/or occupational outcomes or skills and competences;
- assessment;
- certification;
- quality assurance procedures.

The possible allocation of ECTS through the **PQProfile** does not imply the formal accreditation of the programmes or imply that this allocation is binding to third parties. The **PQProfile** is a tool that to help in establishing a better understanding of the professional qualification. The results of a **PQProfile** may be shared with third parties and adopted as necessary.

This tool aims to provide credential evaluators and higher education institutions with reliable information, enabling them to make an informed decision when considering an applicant for undergraduate or postgraduate study based on a professional qualification, as well as when considering the possibility of offering ECTS exemption. This tool draws upon guidance from within the European Area of Recognition (EAR) Manual¹, the European Recognition Manual for Higher Education Institutions (EAR-HEI Manual)², the ECTS Users' Guide³, and the guidance from the RENSA project⁴, the New Paradigms in Recognition (PARADIGMS)⁵

¹ http://eurorecognition.eu/manual/EAR_manual_v_1.0.pdf

² <http://eurorecognition.eu/Manual/EAR%20HEI.pdf>

³ https://ec.europa.eu/education/ects/users-guide/docs/ects-users-guide_en.pdf

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<http://www.skvc.lt/uploads/documents/files/EN%20versija/Projektai/RENSA%20explanatory%20note.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/subjects/paradigms/#results>

project, and the e-Valuate⁶ project. Please see Annex 1 for further information on these projects.

Usage

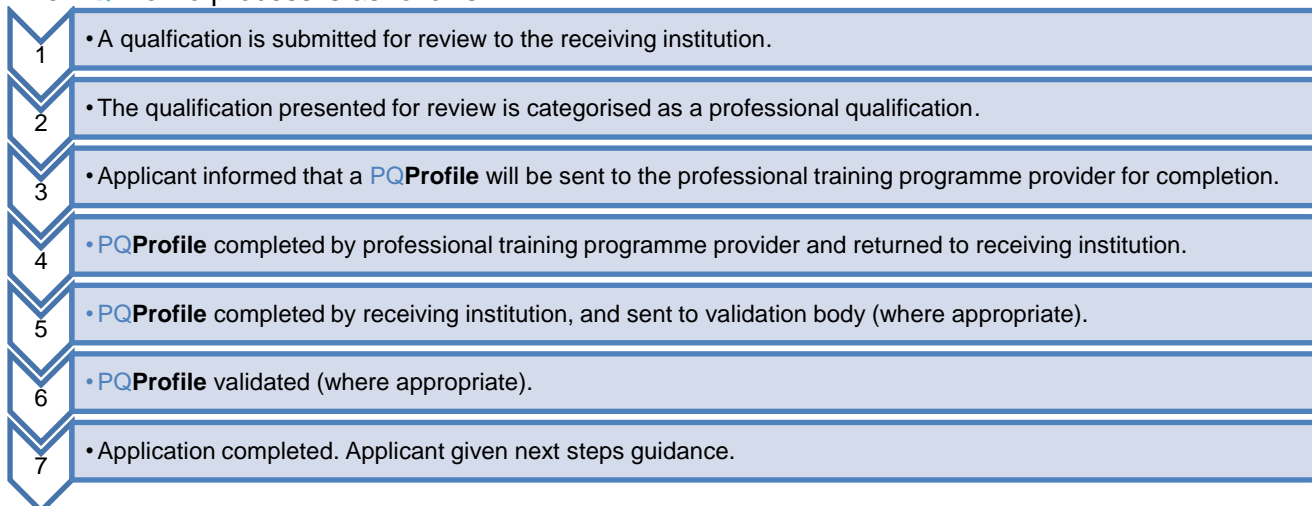
The **PQProfile** comprises three parts.

Part 1 is to be completed by the provider of the professional training programme and requires information on the design and delivery of the programme.

Part 2 is to be completed by the receiving institution. This could be the higher education institution or the ENIC-NARIC, in accordance with national procedures. This part requires consideration of whether the programme may be suitable to be allocated ECTS. If the programme can be allocated ECTS, the applicant may be given exemption from completing a module(s) worth a number of ECTS credits, then this should be indicated here. If the programme cannot be considered eligible for ECTS allocation, the receiving institution should inform the applicant. For reference, 1 ECTS credit is typically 28 hours of study.

Part 3 is a validation of the decisions made in Part 2 of the **PQProfile**. This part may be necessary in some but not all cases, in accordance with national procedures. Where validation is not necessary, the applicant should be informed and provided with next steps. If validation is required, once complete the **PQProfile** should be returned to the receiving institution and the applicant should be informed and given next steps as appropriate.

The **PQProfile** process is as follows:



The annotated **PQProfile** within this document provides guidance on completing the information required.

⁶ *To be inserted once available*

PQProfile

The purpose of the **PQProfile** is to establish the essential information required to facilitate the assessment of the professional qualification awarded after completion of a professional training programme. The aim is to obtain sufficient details about the professional training programme to inform recognition decisions, using a robust but not time-consuming process. This document will facilitate assessment for the purpose of allocating credit, where possible, and may be used as part of the application process for further study. Once complete, this document should be presented together with the relevant qualification documentation. The list below indicates a list of documentation that could be submitted:

- Final Certificate
- Transcripts
- Course content / syllabus
- Website links (if available)

The accompanying **PQProfile** Guidance Document provides information on how this tool can be used.

Part 1 To be completed by the provider. The holder of the qualification is responsible for ensuring this section is complete prior to including it as part of a recognition request.

INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE HOLDER OF THE PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION	
Name*:	<i>This should include the holder's given name and surname(s), and any post-nominal letters – letters placed after a person's name to indicate a certain status or membership – they may use.</i>
Date of birth*:	<i>This should include the day, month and year of birth. (dd/mm/yyyy)</i>
Qualification applied for:	<i>This should indicate the qualification that the holder is seeking recognition for – i.e. the programme they are applying to access</i>
INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION	
Country/countries of qualification*:	<i>This should indicate the country where the professional qualification was awarded. If the qualification is jointly awarded, please list all countries where the professional qualification has been awarded.</i>
Name of the qualification (original language)*:	<i>This should include the full name of the professional qualification (including any specialisation) in the original language.</i>
Date of award:	<i>This should confirm when the professional qualification was awarded (dd/mm/yyyy).</i>
Name of the awarding organisation*:	<i>This should indicate the name of the organisation / institution awarding the professional qualification.</i>
Provider of the professional training programme (if applicable):	<i>This should indicate the name of the institution responsible for the delivery of the professional training programme. This may be the same as the institution awarding the professional qualification. Where delivery is online, this should be indicated here.</i>
Quality assurance procedures*:	<i>This should summarise quality assurance procedures to ensure that the professional training programme is consistently delivered to the same standard, and that standards are upheld. This could refer to internal and external quality assurance procedures.</i>
QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION	
Recognition of the qualification:	<i>This should include information on established links to qualifications frameworks, international standards, articulation agreements or other forms of recognition already in place. This could include recognition by another ENIC/NARIC or other credential evaluation agency,</i>
Accreditation of the awarding	<i>This should indicate whether the awarding organisation has undergone accreditation / quality assurance procedures, and if so, which authority has</i>

organisation*:	<i>conducted this.</i>					
Accreditation of the provider (if applicable):	<i>This should indicate whether the institution responsible for the delivery of the professional training programme has undergone accreditation / quality assurance procedures.</i>					
INFORMATION ON THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME						
Entrance requirements for the professional training programme:	<i>This should detail the official or typical entrance requirements to begin the professional training programme (i.e. the access qualifications, the years of professional experience, etc.).</i>					
Duration of professional training programme:	<i>This should explain the official duration or workload of the professional training in hours, weeks or years – this should include the total effort required by the learner including prescribed reading, taught elements, examinations, etc.</i>					
Scope of the professional training programme:	<i>This should explain the purpose of the professional training programme, such as whether it is continuing professional development, training to work in a specific professional area, mandatory training for licensure, etc.</i>					
Activities required (hours) (if applicable):	Reading:	Contact / Teaching Hours:	Viva / Oral Examination / Interview:	Portfolio / Written Examination:	Seminar:	Other:
	<i>This should detail the notional hours – the average number of hours - required for each activity, if stipulated as part of the design of the professional training programme.</i>					
Learning outcomes (if applicable):	<i>This should detail the learning outcomes – the knowledge, skills and competences associated with the professional training programme – if applicable. It is possible that this may be expressed as occupational outcomes, aims or objectives of the professional training programme.</i>					
Course content:	<i>This should include links to the syllabus, where possible. Where the syllabus is not available online, it may be included as an annex to the PQProfile</i>					
Assessment methods:	<i>This should detail the methods of assessing that the learning outcomes have been achieved (e.g. examination, viva voce, practical demonstration of skills).</i>					
Established recognition agreement / articulation arrangements:	<i>This should include information on established links to qualifications frameworks, international standards, articulation agreements or other forms of recognition already in place. This could include any recognition agreements or articulation arrangements that the professional training programme / awarding organisation has already established, such as mutual recognition agreements, existing framework referencing and external reference points.</i>					

COMPLETION OF THE PQProfile (Part 1)		
Contact details:	Name:	<i>This should indicate the full name of the person completing this section of the PQProfile.</i>
	Position:	<i>This should indicate the position of the person completing this section of the PQProfile.</i>
	Email address:	<i>This should indicate the email address of the person completing this section of the PQProfile.</i>
	Signature:	<i>This should be signed by the person completing this section of the PQProfile.</i>
Date:	<i>This should indicate the date when this section of the PQProfile is completed.</i>	

Part 2 To be completed by the receiving institution. N.B. depending on national contexts, it may be that the ENIC-NARIC office completes some of this part of the PQProfile, with the remainder completed by the higher education institution. This ENIC-NARIC office in the receiving institution can provide guidance on this. Contact details for the ENIC-NARICs can be found at www.enic-naric.net

Receiving country:	<i>This should indicate the country where the holder of the professional qualification is seeking recognition.</i>		
Receiving institution:	<i>This should indicate the receiving institution where the holder of the professional qualification is seeking recognition. This could be the higher education institution, the ENIC-NARIC, or another third party depending on national contexts.</i>		
Eligibility for assessment:	Yes	No	
	<i>This should indicate whether Part 1 of the PQProfile has been sufficiently completed to support the process of determining a comparable level. If insufficient information is available, it may be necessary to contact the provider for further guidance.</i>		
Comparable NQF level:	<i>This should indicate the recommended or binding comparable NQF level of the professional qualification. In accordance with national contexts, this may need to be validated by a designated body (see Part 3). Whether recognition of the level of the qualification is binding or a recommendation varies from one country to another. If the receiving institution is not permitted to determine a comparable level for the professional qualification, this should be stated here and the decision should be indicated in Part 3. The ENIC-NARIC in the receiving country may be responsible for determining this. .</i>		
EQF level:	5	6	7
	<i>This should indicate the EQF level that the comparable NQF level may be referenced to.</i>		
Eligibility to be recommended for ECTS credit exemption:	Yes	No	The receiving institution is not allowed to recommend ECTS credit exemption
	<i>This should indicate whether Part 1 of the PQProfile has been completed to support the process of recommending ECTS credit exemption. Where recommending ECTS credit exemption is not within the remit of the receiving institution, next steps guidance should be provided to the individual seeking recognition.</i>		
Recommended ECTS credit exemption:	<i>This should indicate the recommended ECTS credit exemption. In accordance with national contexts, this may need to be validated by a designated body (see Part 3).</i>		
Further information / next steps:	<i>This should include information on what the holder of the professional qualification could do once the PQProfile is complete. This could include recommendations for further study, signposting to professional/regulatory bodies, or other guidance as appropriate.</i>		

COMPLETION OF THE PQProfile (Part 2)

Contact details:	Name:	<i>This should indicate the full name of the person completing this section of the PQProfile.</i>
	Position:	<i>This should indicate the position of the person completing this section of the PQProfile.</i>
	Email address:	<i>This should indicate the email address of the person completing this section of the PQProfile.</i>
	Signature:	<i>This should be signed by the person completing this section of the PQProfile.</i>
Date:	<i>This should indicate the date when this section of the PQProfile is completed.</i>	

Part 3 To be completed by the designated body in the receiving country, where appropriate. To determine the body responsible for this, please contact the ENIC-NARIC, or alternatively email e4@naric.org.uk.

Validation:	Comparable NQF level:	<i>This should confirm whether the comparable NQF level of the professional qualification is accepted by the validation body. In cases where the receiving institution</i>
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		<i>may not recommend a comparable NQF level, this section should state what comparable NQF level may be given.</i>
	ECTS credit exemption:	<i>This should confirm whether the recommended ECTS exemption is accepted by the validation body. In cases where the receiving institution may not recommend ECTS credit exemption, this section should state what exemption may be given.</i>

COMPLETION OF THE PQProfile (Part 3)		
Contact details:	Name:	<i>This should indicate the full name of the person completing this section of the PQProfile.</i>
	Position:	<i>This should indicate the position of the person completing this section of the PQProfile.</i>
	Organisation:	<i>This should indicate the name of the organisation that the person completing this section of the PQProfile represents.</i>
	Email address:	<i>This should indicate the email address of the person completing this section of the PQProfile.</i>
	Signature:	<i>This should be signed by the person completing this section of the PQProfile.</i>
Date:	<i>This should indicate the date when this section of the PQProfile is completed.</i>	

Annex 1: Further Reading

EAR and EAR-HEI

A professional qualification presented could meet the definitions outlined in Chapter 13: Non-Traditional Learning and/or Chapter 16: Non-Recognised But Legitimate Institutions from the EAR Manual⁷. In Chapter 13, the focus on learning outcomes as the key consideration when assessing formal, non-formal and informal learning is clear. Chapter 16 focuses on qualifications awarded by non-recognised but legitimate institutions. If a professional qualification is awarded by a recognised institution, the recognition process may be more straightforward provided sufficient quality assurance procedures are in place for the non-traditional style of learning. Where the professional qualification is not awarded by a recognised institution, it may still be possible to recognise the professional qualification provided evidence on the legitimacy of the institution and the qualification itself can be determined. Chapter 8 of the EAR-HEI Manual⁸ recommend that credits be accepted as evidence of the workload of a study programme and the amount of study successfully completed. In this context, allocating credit to professional qualifications can facilitate the process of understanding how much learning has been achieved, and therefore allow may credit exemptions to be made.

ECTS Users' Guide

The ECTS Users' Guide⁹ describes the outcome-based approach to using ECTS credits, focusing on how the use of ECTS credits can facilitate mobility, and of relevance here, mobility between different education sectors and contexts of learning through recognition and credit transfer¹⁰. The Users' Guide maintains that the award of credit for informal and non-formal learning should be within the competence of higher education institutions, and that the recognition of the learning outcomes gained through non-formal and informal learning should lead to the award of the same number of ECTS credits as a formal programme, where the learning outcomes correspond¹¹.

PARADIGMS

A methodology to evaluate e-learning that falls outside of traditional, accredited higher education has been developed during two European projects: PARADIGMS¹² and e-Valuate. Both projects identify seven criteria for assessment that should be taken into account when assessing "stand-alone e-learning" such as MOOCs and micro-credentials, and can also be useful when assessing professional qualifications:

1. quality of the study programme;
2. verification of the certificate;
3. level of the study programme
4. learning outcomes;
5. workload;
6. the way study results are tested;
7. identification of the participant.

As with the evaluation of professional qualifications, the information needed to carry out an assessment of stand-alone e-learning is often not readily available. The developed

⁷ European Area of Recognition Manual. Available at: <http://eurorecognition.eu/manual/EAR_manual_v_1.0.pdf>

⁸ The European Recognition Manual for Higher Education Institutions. Available at: <<http://eurorecognition.eu/Manual/EAR%20HEI.pdf>>

⁹ ECTS Users' Guide. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/education/ects/users-guide/docs/ects-users-guide_en.pdf>

¹⁰ *ibid*, p. 14.

¹¹ *ibid*, p. 46.

¹² PARADIGMS. Available at: <<https://www.nuffic.nl/en/subjects/paradigms/>>

methodology makes use of a “stoplight model” to rank the quality and reliability of the information that is available, to determine if an informed evaluation can be made.

You will find more information on the PARADIGMS project online¹³. Publications produced as part of the e-Valuate project: A Practitioner’s guide for recognition of e-learning and Academic recognition of e-learning: Recommendations for online learning providers are also available online¹⁴.

RENSA

The RENSA¹⁵ project reviewed the recognition of non-country specific awards, many of which are of a professional or sectoral nature. From this work came the recommendation that professional training programmes (as well as other non-country specific awards and qualifications) may sit outside national systems by necessity, but that key criteria can be assessed. This may include quality assurance procedures, learning outcomes, and existing links to qualifications frameworks. National considerations may also be of relevance, for example whether the programme is generally accepted by the relevant national professional associations and regulatory bodies (and whether they accept that the training is of a particular level).

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ The Practitioner’s guide for recognition of e-learning: <https://www.nuffic.nl/publicaties/practitioners-guide-recognition-e-learning/> and Academic recognition of e-learning: <https://www.nuffic.nl/publicaties/academic-recognition-e-learning/>

¹⁵ RENSA. Available at:

<<http://www.skvc.lt/uploads/documents/files/EN%20versija/Projektai/RENSA%20explanatory%20note.pdf>>