EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ADVANCEMENT

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VERIFICATION & REGISTRY PROCEDURE NOTE

Independent Qualifications Framework (IQF)

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Procedure Control Attribute	Specification
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Governance & Non-Accreditation Scope

This Procedure Note governs optional alignment verification and registry listing under the Independent Qualifications Framework (IQF) maintained by EAHEA.

IQF verification confirms that an institution's documented learning outcomes, notional workload, credit mapping, assessment integrity, faculty equivalence, and public disclosures align with IQF reference standards. It does not constitute statutory state recognition, national degree equivalence, or formal institutional or programmatic accreditation.

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Structure of the Document

This document sets out the end-to-end internal evaluation and registry procedure for Independent Qualifications Framework (IQF) alignment submissions.

Procedure Sections Overview

Section	Title	Operational Scope
Section 1	Purpose and Governance Mandate	Objectives, consistency, proportionality, and transparency principles
Section 2	Submission Package & Intake Screening	Required dossier components, evidence artifacts, intake completeness checks, fees, and confidentiality and retention of files
Section 3	Substantive Evaluation & Verification Scoring Protocol	Evaluation by the Quality Assurance Commission and domain-by-domain assessment across Checklist Items 1.1–5.2 of Form EAHEA-IQF-FORM-02
Section 4	Verification Decision Categories & SLA Timelines	IQF-VERIFIED, IQF-CONDITIONAL, and IQF-DEFERRED criteria, cure windows, SLAs, and the Verification Decision Notice (Form EAHEA-IQF-QA-FORM-01)
Section 5	IQF Alignment Registry Rules, Validity, Maintenance & Revocation	Registry schema, validity periods of 3 years (2 years for newly launched programs), 30-day material change notice, annual confirmation, and suspension and revocation rules with the Registry Suspension and Revocation Notice (Form EAHEA-IQF-QA-FORM-02)
Section 6	Appeals & Reconsideration Procedure	30-calendar-day request for review by the EAHEA Management Board

1. Purpose and Governance Mandate

1.1 Procedural Purpose

This Procedure Note establishes the internal evaluation, verification, decision-making, and registry management rules applied by the European Association for Higher Education Advancement (EAHEA) when reviewing Self-Alignment Dossiers (Form EAHEA-IQF-FORM-01) submitted under the Independent Qualifications Framework (IQF).

While self-alignment allows institutions and non-formal providers to structure and declare IQF alignment internally, optional EAHEA verification provides an independent structured check of the submitted evidence against IQF standards and enables inclusion in the EAHEA IQF Alignment Registry.

1.2 Core Governance Principles

- **Consistency & Fairness:** Every application is evaluated against the same five Core Quality & Self-Alignment Standards and the 13 verification items of the Self-Alignment and Verification Checklist (Form EAHEA-IQF-FORM-02).
- **Proportionality:** Evaluation depth and documentation expectations are proportionate to whether the qualification is a short non-formal module (e.g., IQF Levels 1–2) or a comprehensive diploma, degree, or executive program (e.g., IQF Levels 3–6), while strictly enforcing core outcome, workload, assessment, and disclosure rules.
- **Transparency & Non-Accreditation Clarity:** Registry records and verification outcomes accurately communicate verified IQF alignment without implying statutory state recognition, national degree equivalence, or formal institutional or programmatic accreditation.

2. Submission Package & Intake Screening

2.1 Required Submission Package

An institution requesting optional EAHEA IQF verification and registry listing must submit a complete package containing:

- **Completed Self-Alignment Dossier (Form EAHEA-IQF-FORM-01):** Sections 1 through 5 completed in full, including institutional metadata, level assignment rationale, learning outcomes matrix, Notional Learning Hours (NLH) breakdown, and governance/disclosure summaries.
- **Completed Self-Alignment and Verification Checklist (Form EAHEA-IQF-FORM-02):** All 13 verification rows populated in the Institution Self-Check column (Pass / Partial / Gap) with evidence indicators.
- **Program / Course Syllabus:** Aligned to the syllabus template of the Program Evidence Templates (Form EAHEA-IQF-FORM-03), connecting learning outcomes, notional workload, instructional methods, academic/AI integrity rules, and assessments.
- **Workload & Credit Mapping Evidence:** NLH calculation sheet (Section 4 of Form EAHEA-IQF-FORM-01) showing direct, asynchronous, independent, applied, and assessment hours mapped to the credit system used (if any) and to reference credits.
- **Assessment Plan & Grading Rubric(s):** Assessment weighting table, passing rules, and analytical rubrics or scoring criteria mapped to Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), prepared on the Program Evidence Templates (Form EAHEA-IQF-FORM-03).
- **Faculty Equivalence & Public Disclosure Evidence:** Summary of instructor academic degrees or senior practitioner equivalence, plus draft or live public program catalog/certificate text displaying IQF metadata (minimum content: Master Guidebook, Annex C), and the Self-Alignment Declaration (Form EAHEA-IQF-FORM-04) where the institution publishes one.

2.2 Administrative Intake Screening (Target: 3–5 Business Days)

Prior to substantive academic evaluation, EAHEA administrative intake conducts a completeness and consistency check within a target turnaround of 3–5 business days:

- **Completeness & Legibility Check:** Confirm that all required dossier sections and supporting evidence files are attached, readable, and properly labeled.
- **Internal Metadata Consistency Check:** Verify that the declared IQF level, NLH, credit system and value (if used), and reference credits contain no obvious contradictions.
- **Incomplete Package Handling:** If mandatory items are missing, administrative intake returns the submission once with a missing-items note for completeness remediation before substantive review begins.

2.3 Confidentiality and Retention of Submitted Files

EAHEA treats every dossier and its evidence as confidential. Only the evaluators, the Quality Assurance Commission, the registry administrators, and, in an appeal, the Management Board see them. The public registry shows only the fields of Section 5.1. EAHEA keeps the submitted files for the validity period of the registry entry and for five years after it ends, or for five years after a decision not to verify, and then deletes them.

2.4 Fees

EAHEA charges fees for verification, consulting, and registry listing. The fees are published on the EAHEA Service Fees page. Self-alignment under the IQF needs no fee and no authorization from EAHEA.

3. Substantive Evaluation & Verification Scoring Protocol

3.1 Evaluation by the Quality Assurance Commission

The EAHEA Quality Assurance Commission evaluates every submission and issues the verification decision. Each submitted program or qualification is evaluated by at least two independent evaluators appointed by the Commission. For complex, multi-level, or upper-level (IQF Levels 5–6) submissions, the Commission may appoint additional evaluators. Evaluators must possess academic credentials or senior domain/executive experience at or above the assessed IQF level and must declare any financial, institutional, or personal conflict of interest prior to reviewing a file.

3.2 Domain-by-Domain Evaluation Criteria (Mapped to Checklist Items 1.1–5.2)

Evaluators examine all 13 checklist items grouped across five evaluation domains, recording Verified or Action Required for each item of the Self-Alignment and Verification Checklist (Form EAHEA-IQF-FORM-02):

Evaluation Domain	Checklist Items	Key Verification Questions & Evidence Standards for Evaluators
Domain A: Level & Learning Outcomes Alignment	1.1 – 1.3	Are PLOs measurable and drafted with action verbs appropriate to the target level? Do all four IQF descriptor axes meet the Minimum Threshold Rule without isolated capstones inflating the baseline? Is the level justified by outcome rigor rather than instructional duration alone (Outcome-Over-Duration Rule)? Is the credential title supported by its legal basis, and does any level name or track name meet the minimum workload of Section 4.3 and Annex B of the Master Document?
Domain B: Assessment Integrity & Rubrics	2.1 – 2.3	Do assessment tasks validly test the cognitive, analytical, and applied demands of the target IQF level (e.g., analytical/integrative/applied tasks rather than rote recall alone at Levels 4–6)? Are grading rubrics, pass criteria, auditable records, and generative AI/academic integrity policies clearly defined?

Evaluation Domain	Checklist Items	Key Verification Questions & Evidence Standards for Evaluators
Domain C: Workload, Credits, Stacking & RPL	3.1 – 3.3	Does the NLH calculation include instructional, independent, applied, and assessment components using realistic benchmarks? Do the stated credits and reference credits match the total NLH at the factor of the credit system used? Are micro-credential stacking and/or RPL rules (if used) transparent and outcome-verified?
Domain D: Faculty Equivalence & Lightweight IQA	4.1 – 4.2	Do instructors meet the academic qualification standard (at or above the level taught) or documented senior practitioner equivalence (e.g., 7–10+ years senior domain/executive practice with verifiable evidence)? Are pre-launch review, assessment moderation, learner feedback/NLH calibration, and annual program review operational and recorded on the Annual Program Review and Internal Quality Assurance Record (Form EAHEA-IQF-FORM-05)?
Domain E: Public Transparency & Non-Accreditation	5.1 – 5.2	Do public catalogs, web pages, credential templates, and transcripts display the IQF level, NLH, and any credits accurately, with at least the content of Annex C of the Master Guidebook? Is IQF alignment presented without implying statutory recognition or formal accreditation?

4. Verification Decision Categories & SLA Timelines

Following substantive evaluation (with a standard target of 10–15 business days from complete administrative intake), the Quality Assurance Commission issues one of three formal verification decisions on the Verification Decision Notice (Form EAHEA-IQF-QA-FORM-01):

4.1 Decision 1: VERIFIED (IQF-VERIFIED)

- **Qualification Criteria:** All 13 checklist items (1.1–5.2) are satisfied as Verified across Domains A–E with no unresolved deficiencies. Minor editorial observations may be included as non-binding advisory notes.
- **Procedural Outcome:** The qualification is entered into the EAHEA IQF Alignment Registry and assigned a unique Registry ID.

4.2 Decision 2: CONDITIONALLY VERIFIED (IQF-CONDITIONAL)

- **Qualification Criteria:** Core learning outcome alignment, workload coherence, and academic integrity are sound, but specific, bounded items require correction before final registry listing, such as clarifying a rubric threshold, adjusting an NLH line item, adding an explicit AI-use clause to the syllabus, or correcting the public program information.
- **Procedural Outcome & Cure Window:** EAHEA issues an Action Required Notice (Section 3 of Form EAHEA-IQF-QA-FORM-01) listing exact remediation items and a 30-calendar-day cure window. Upon timely submission and verification of remediated evidence, status upgrades to IQF-VERIFIED. If unresolved after 30 calendar days without an approved extension, the file moves to IQF-DEFERRED.

4.3 Decision 3: DEFERRED / NOT VERIFIED (IQF-DEFERRED)

- **Qualification Criteria:** Substantive misalignments exist, such as assigning an IQF level that violates the Minimum Threshold Rule, justifying level placement by duration despite insufficient outcome complexity, lacking credible assessment or faculty/practitioner equivalence, or misrepresenting IQF alignment as statutory or accredited status.
- **Procedural Outcome:** Verification is deferred with a written gap report mapped to checklist items (Section 3 of Form EAHEA-IQF-QA-FORM-01). The institution may revise its curriculum and evidence package and submit a new application once deficiencies are addressed.

4.4 Summary Matrix of Decisions & Service Timelines

Decision Code	Status Label	Core Trigger Condition	Timeline / Follow-Up Rule
IQF-VERIFIED	Verified	All 13 checklist items verified across Domains A–E	10–15 business days review SLA; immediate entry into IQF Alignment Registry

Decision Code	Status Label	Core Trigger Condition	Timeline / Follow-Up Rule
IQF-CONDITIONAL	Conditionally Verified	Sound core alignment; bounded technical, editorial, or public information fixes required	30-calendar-day cure window to submit remediated evidence for upgrade to Verified
IQF-DEFERRED	Deferred / Not Verified	Fundamental level, outcome, assessment, faculty, or misrepresentation gaps	Written gap report issued (Form EAHEA-IQF-QA-FORM-01); institution may reapply after substantive redesign

5. IQF Alignment Registry Rules, Validity, Maintenance & Revocation

5.1 Standardized Registry Entry Fields

The EAHEA IQF Alignment Registry lists EAHEA Verified qualifications only. Each verified qualification recorded in it includes standardized, transparent metadata:

- **Registry ID & Verification Status:** A unique Registry ID (the last two digits of the year, the letters IQ, the day of the decision, and the record number, for example 24IQ23012) and current status (Verified).
- **Institution & Program Identity:** Legal/operating institution name, country/jurisdiction, institution type, program/qualification title and its legal basis (statutory degree title, level name, header without a level name, and any track name), and format.
- **Verified IQF & Credit Metrics:** Verified IQF Level (1–6), program orientation, total NLH, and credits in the credit system used, if any (for example the EAHEA Credit Systems (MUC, PAC, ILC, EUC), ECTS, CATS, U.S. credit hours, or a national system), with optional reference credits (ECTS, CATS, U.S. credit hours).
- **Dates & Governance Scope:** Verification date, validity/review cycle date, and mandatory non-accreditation scope statement.

5.2 Validity Period, Annual Continuity & Material Change Notification

- **Validity Period:** Verified registry status remains valid for 3 years (2 years for newly launched programs verified prior to first-cohort learner workload calibration), subject to annual confirmation that no unapproved changes have occurred. The institution sends the Annual Program Review and Internal Quality Assurance Record (Form EAHEA-IQF-FORM-05) with its annual confirmation (Section 8 of the form) to EAHEA every year, by the anniversary of the verification decision.
- **30-Day Material Change Notification:** If an institution makes material changes to a verified program's IQF level, credit/NLH volume, core PLOs, or assessment structure, it must notify EAHEA within 30 calendar days so an update review can be conducted.

5.3 Suspension or Revocation of Registry Listing

EAHEA may suspend or revoke a registry listing if:

- **Misrepresentation of Status:** The institution presents IQF verification or self-alignment as statutory state recognition, national degree equivalence, or formal institutional or programmatic accreditation.
- **Undisclosed Material Changes or Quality Breakdown:** Substantive changes alter alignment without disclosure, or quality/integrity failures undermine IQF standards.
- **Failure to Remediate:** Required corrective actions, the annual confirmation, or post-calibration/renewal obligations remain unresolved after notice.

EAHEA first tells the institution in writing on the Registry Suspension and Revocation Notice (Form EAHEA-IQF-QA-FORM-02), names the reason, and gives 15 business days to respond or to correct. The decision on suspension or revocation is in writing. The listing stays in the registry until that decision is made. When EAHEA suspends a listing, the listing is removed from the registry at once and is shown again when the suspension ends. When EAHEA revokes a listing, it is removed from the registry. In cases of acute misrepresentation or fraud, where immediate suspension is required to protect learners and public transparency, EAHEA may suspend the listing before the notice.

A suspension or revocation concerns the registry listing only. It does not change the status of the institution with EAHEA in any other procedure.

6. Appeals & Reconsideration Procedure

6.1 Grounds and Filing Window for Review

If an institution contests an IQF-CONDITIONAL or IQF-DEFERRED decision, or a suspension or revocation of a registry listing, based on procedural irregularity, misreading of submitted evidence, or misapplication of IQF rules, it may ask the Management Board of EAHEA to review the decision. The request is in writing and is made within 30 calendar days of receiving the decision.

The request must identify the specific checklist items (1.1–5.2) contested, where the decision concerns a verification, and reference evidence already on file (new program redesigns should be submitted as a revised/new application rather than an appeal).

6.2 Review by the Management Board

The Management Board reviews the dossier, the evaluation notes, and the request, and states its decision in writing. The decision of the Management Board is final within EAHEA's IQF verification procedure.