



QUAL-IM-G

Improving the implementation of quality assurance in career guidance

Certification Procedure of Career Guidance Practitioners

Recommendations for Organisations Providing Certification
and Certification Development Framework

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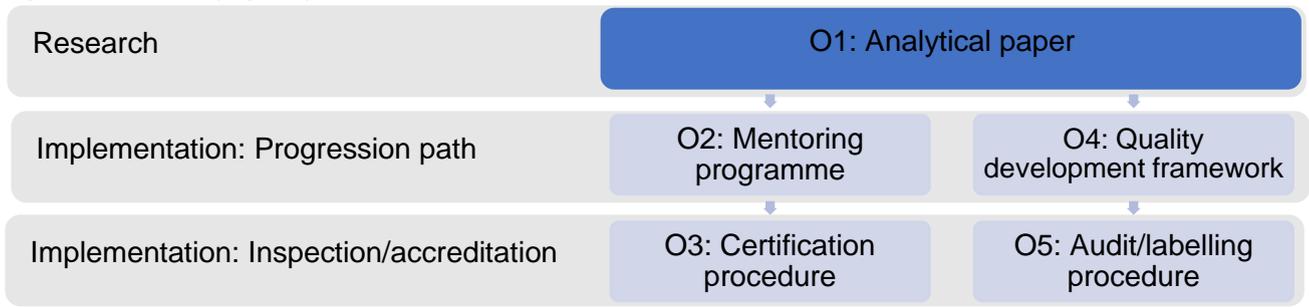
Summary

This document was produced within an Erasmus + funded project “Qual-IM-G” that builds on the experience of different projects, initiatives and existing mechanisms in the field of quality assurance for career guidance in the partner countries. It recognises that countries, depending on the history in the field of careers will have varying traditions in developing quality standards to support individual practitioners and organisational procedures and proposes a set of intellectual outputs that can optimize the implementation of existing mechanisms in the field of quality assurance for career guidance or facilitate the development of new ones:

- **O1: Analytical paper on impact and success factors of different QA approaches in Europe:** Through qualitative and quantitative research, the current state of different trans-national and national QA practices in CG were analysed. The paper identifies the success factors and impact of these different approaches and is the basis for the development of the following outputs (iCeGS).
- **O2: Mentoring programme for CG practitioners:** A non-formal mentoring/training programme that allows practitioners to comply with a quality standard. It contains training modules that allow the counsellor to develop skills and competences in areas required in most of the QA practices focused on individual counsellor. It contains a core mentoring programme for areas most important in certification processes and supplementary modules (abif).
- **O3: Certification/accreditation procedure of CG practitioners:** Procedure for the accreditation of counsellors with recommendations and examples of self-assessment tools and procedures, list of possible required evidence and a checklist for the implementation of such mechanism (SKPKR).
- **O4: Quality development framework (QDF) for providers:** A model that supports service providers with their continuous quality development and assurance irrespective of a formal external certification/auditing process (see O5). The implementation of the QDF requires voluntary commitment and a participative process of all members of the organization wishing to improve their services. The QDF is applicable to various Quality Standards existing in different countries. It focusses however on those indicators that are most commonly present in different standards (*nfb*).
- **O5: Audit/labelling procedure for providers:** Contains pre-audit process, self-evaluation questionnaire/checklist, audit plan and certification process diagram (BKS Úspech).

The following details these outputs and shows how they relate to the key aims of the project:

Figure 1. Summary of outputs



All the outputs are freely available for download on the website www.guidancequality.eu. For more details about the different outputs please contact the respective lead organization.

Country	Organization	Representative	Email address
Slovakia	Association for Career Guidance and Career Development	Board of the association	info@zkprk.sk
Czech Republic	Association for Career Guidance and Career Development	Alice Müllerová	sdruzenikp@gmail.com
Germany	National Guidance Forum in Education, Career and Employment	Karen Schober/ Barbara Lampe	info@forum-beratung.de
Austria	ABIF – analysis, consulting and interdisciplinary research	Claudia Liebeswar	liebeswar@abif.at
United Kingdom	International Centre for Guidance Studies at the University of Derby	Siobhan Neary	S.Neary@derby.ac.uk
Netherlands	NOLOC - Professional Association of career guidance counsellors in Netherlands	Board of the association	info@noloc.nl
Norway	Inland Norway University of Applied Science	Erik Haug	Erik.Haug@inn.no

This report is providing basic guidelines for the organisations providing certification process for individual career guidance practitioners as identified within the project Improving the Implementation of Quality Assurance in Career Guidance. It may serve to the professional associations or other bodies to navigate them in establishing the certification process. These recommendations have been developed on the findings from various certification processes (Dodd et al., 2019) and on the basis of the Certification development framework (NOLOC, 2019).

1. Key Findings Regarding the Certification Process

Dodd and her colleagues (2019) presents a summary of various certification procedures for career guidance professionals and/or career guidance organisations collected from seven countries as well as one international standard. Hooley and Rice (2018, in Dodd et al., 2019) argues that the development of quality standards, including certification procedure, should be part of a holistic quality assurance system. There are six key domains in which quality and the certification procedure may be enacted in the delivery of career guidance:

- **Policy.** Quality assurance (QA) can help ensure career guidance is delivered in a consistent manner in line with current policy requirements.
- **Organisation.** QA can help determine whether provider organisations are designed, resourced and managed in a way that enables quality delivery.
- **Process.** QA can provide blueprints on the way organisations or individuals can reduce errors in client experience.
- **People.** QA can ensure compliance that delivery staff adhere to professional standards of the sector.
- **Output or outcome.** QA can focus on defined and measurable outcomes of clients using the service.
- **Consumption.** QA can be driven by customer satisfaction of the career guidance service.

Certification procedures referred by Dodd et al. (2019) (altogether 21 procedures) are:

- focused on QA in the “organisation” and “people” domains,
- focused on national labels,



- contain resources to guide the process - 35% guidance docs, 20% workshops, less than 20% mentoring (3 certification procedures out of 21),
- supported by audit tools - 63% more than one type, 68% a portfolio evidence (mostly in conjunction with other assessment methods) - difficulties to articulate how the competences are met within the portfolio may create barriers to successful certification and seem like a big challenge while formalising the certification.

According to the Dodd et al. (2019) the CP is based mainly on the **organic approach** - quality is defined by the provider and the professional driven by professional values and the desire to do a good job. Mechanisms include quality circles, supervisory arrangements, peer observation and mentoring, professional networks and local self-evaluation. There is the clear involvement of users as co-producers.

The recommendations of to overcome the barriers:

- there should be offered multiple modes of support,
- the certification procedure should be a part of policy on career guidance (increasing motivation and interest of counsellors and supporting consistent cycle of its improvement) (Dodd, et. al., 2019).

2. The Certification Process (CP) designed in the project QUAL-IM-G

The certification process (CP) designed in the project QUAL-IM-G is based on the Certification development framework (NOLOC, 2019) that is providing useful source for the process of designing certification procedures, such as its foundations, professional profile, testing framework, mentoring, certification and recertification process and organisational framework and on examples of existing certification procedures (see the list of references and their summary in Dodd et al., 2019).

The certification process has its focus on the self-evaluation of the career guidance practitioner's (CGP) current level of knowledge and skills and definition of self-development. Within the certification process the CGP can find out his / her actual level of professional competences, reflect the whole career guidance process and sets individual goals. Moreover, it provides an opportunity for self-reflection and focuses on quality as well. It is about *what* I do in CG and *how* I do it - based on the **organic approach** - quality defined by the professional driven by professional values and the desire to do a good job.

Overall the CP has its focus on QA in the “people” domain. It means QA can ensure compliance that delivery staff adhere to professional standards of the sector.

The Quality Standard should be:

- easy to comprehend, especially in terms of what the Quality of CG is,
- useful for CGP's clients,
- supportive for building up the community of career guidance and counselling,
- comprehensive - it should comprise all the aspects that have an effect on the quality of career guidance.

Table 1. The Certification Process - Quality Standard / Assessment Indicators

<p>NOLOC, Netherland*</p>	<p>The standard has 6 main subjects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education and skills in the field of people-oriented services (at least on level EQF-6) - Relevant working experience in the field of career guidance, career advice, outplacement or work reintegration; still being active in this field / fields as a guidance professional - Relevant theoretical and practical knowledge of careers, labour market and their interaction - Relevant theoretical knowledge and practical experience of methods, techniques and instruments - Mastering the most important competences of a career professional, coach and advisor: empathy, effective communication, reflection, advising / coaching - Showing a professional attitude: self-reflection, acting ethically
<p>WBA, Austria*</p>	<p>On the basis of a two-level modular qualification profile, the relevant competences are submitted and recognised.</p> <p>WBA-Certificate: Certified Adult Educator - - Educational theory Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Didactic Skills - Management Skills - Counselling Skills - Librarianship and Information Management Skills - Social Skills - Personal Skills - General optional modules (foreign languages or ICT-knowledge) can be proven - Compulsory optional modules to the extent of 9 ECTS (wba) must be proven <p>In addition, they must have at least 500 hours of practical, hands-on experience (at least 1 year).</p> <p>WBA-Diploma: Graduate Adult Educator - in addition to the above</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Science-oriented thesis (with focus on the chosen specific area, ie. either teaching, educational management, counselling or librarianship and information management) - Specialist literature and book reviews <p>In addition, they must have at least 400 hours of practical, hands-on experience (at least 4 years) in adult counselling.</p>

<p>ECGC, Austria*</p>	<p>In case of the degree of Academic Expert these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - knowledge about labour market dynamics, the professional world, educational portfolios and basic aspects of counselling - communicational and conflict management skills - practical skills in coaching, assessment and placement service - professional ethics - self-learning skills - reflective skills - stress management - academic writing, methods and research skills <p>In case of the consecutive Master's degree, skills in the following fields must be acquired in addition to the above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - knowledge about guidance in an international context - organizational development - knowledge and information management
<p>BBR, Germany*</p>	<p>The BBR manages the registration and certification according to the statutes of its organization. The quality standards are based on external standards (German association for educational and vocational counselling dvb e.V., IVSBB-AIOSP and other recommended standards).</p>

The certification process contains **a self-assessment tool and a two-part mentoring programme** to guide the process and is supported by **a portfolio evidence** as an audit tool. The goal of the self-assessment and the mentoring programme is **to be prepared for the certification**.

Several rules need to be respected for its successful implementation:

- CGP accept change when they believe it makes sense.
- CGP accept the change positively when they believe it will also bring something to them personally.
- CGP accept change when they believe the organisation is serious about it and has the necessary professional capacities.

2. 1. The Self-assessment tool

Self-evaluation is supposed to be a thorough process that enables CGPs to be critically reflective about themselves as professionals and about their practice. It should support them to:

- reflect on what they have done,
- think about what they might do next,
- identify and focus on areas they wish to develop expertise or accomplishment,
- consider their own progress and development and career planning,
- deeply understand their professional practice, their professional learning and their impact on their thinking, professional actions and the learning of their clients.

The Self-assessment tool (Tool) designed within the project involves:

- deep and searching questions about self and practice,
- (the XY's)¹ Quality Standards to inform and guide the CGP's reflections,
- other influencing factors such as ethical principles and other issues relevant to the particular context,
- application of the CGP's ongoing reflections and enquiry into practice,
- evidence from a range of sources to inform and support the self-evaluation.

The Tool allows to engage in a reflective evaluation more critically and provides the opportunity for better understanding of oneself and one's practice. It uses reflective questions regarding the current state of self and practice as well as those focused on the future development and action planning. For more detailed advice, guidance and counselling regarding the self assessment, practitioners may use the mentoring programme which is a part of the CP in order to support CGPs in preparation for the certification.

Table 2. The Certification Process - Internal / External Assessment

NOLOC, Netherland*	internal assessment only (self-assessment and assessment by colleagues)
CMI, Netherlands*	external assessment only
WBA, Austria*	both internal and external assessment
ECGC, Austria*	both internal and external assessment
BBR, Germany*	both internal and external assessment
WBH, Germany*	both internal and external assessment

¹ The certification process is designed to be applicable to various quality standards models.

2. 2. The Mentoring Program

The mentoring programme contains

- self-study learning **modules** focused on specific topics identified as the most important for CGPs (for more details see project website: www.guidancequality.eu),
- group **mentoring** facilitated by a mentor (experienced professional educated in mentoring) based on self-reflection and peer learning.

In case the need was specified by the CGP or the mentor there should be the possibility to offer one-by-one mentoring. It depends on the capacity of the professional association and its agreement with the mentor (association member).

Table 3. The Certification Process - Support for CG Practitioners

NOLOC, Netherland*	There is a description of the Noloc assessment framework, in which all assessment requirements are explicitly mentioned. In this framework, the requirements of the documents itself that need to be handed in are also described. In addition, there is a guidance document available, describing the requirements and the ways they could be proven in more detail. For individual candidates who are a member of Noloc, there is the possibility – on a voluntary basis – to make use of a mentoring programme.
CMI, Netherlands*	The mentoring programme is essential for individuals in order to meet the quality standard.
WBA, Austria*	WBA-advisers guide candidates through the certification process. WBA acknowledges prior learning results and offers guidance and counselling as far as the acquisition of missing skills is concerned. Lack of competences can be made up by attending further courses or by submitting further evidence. However, WBA does not offer further education programmes itself but accredits suitable courses offered by various AE institutions throughout Austria.
ECGC, Austria*	The courses required are offered at Danube University Krems itself. At WIFI, respective voluntary preparation courses are offered in addition to the assessment centre and electronic exams themselves.
BBR, Germany*	The BBR e.V. is not an employer of career guidance counsellors and the statutes also do not define the BBR e.V. as a provider of training, qualification etc. The registration itself and the publication of registered counsellors is a result of the demand for qualified, professional counselling. The German Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (dvb) however provides relevant training courses on the website and in its internal newsletter (dvb-info).
WBH, Germany*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidance documents - Workshops - Consultation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supervision

2. 3. The Portfolio

Although a professional portfolio performs many other functions (representation, evaluation, etc.) the CGP's portfolio within the certification process links to the **preparation for the certification**. The **minimum content** of the portfolio is:

- the evidence of formal education and trainings in the field,
- the evidence of the quantity of the experience,
- CV,
- the completed self-assessment tool,
- case study.

Table 4. The Certification Process - Required Content of the Portfolio

NOLOC, Netherland*	Curriculum vitae, written casus, supporting documents showing proof of the required education and other requirements are being judged by the assessor. In case the assessor has doubts whether the candidate fulfils the requirements, the files will be judged by a second assessor.
WBA, Austria*	<p>WBA-Certificate: Certified Adult Educator - Adult educators can submit competences and practical experience acquired in various ways and with different types of proofs. These supporting documents are assessed on the basis of the wba-qualification profiles and then acknowledged. In addition to that, the candidates have to take part and pass the “Certification Workshop”, a three-day-assessment including a test on educational theories. The certification workshop has examination character. At the same time it is set up in a way that is appropriate to help participants develop a broadened self-perception and an enhanced identification with their role as adult educators.</p> <p>WBA-Diploma: Graduate Adult Educator - First, candidates have to prove that they have acquired all of the required competences in a formal or informal way. Second, they have to write a theory-guided, work-related thesis on a subject from the area they specialise in. When all of the competences required have been substantiated and approved by the accreditation board, candidates can take the final exam ("Kolloquium"). During the "Kolloquium" they present their thesis and describe its relevance to their work as adult educators. The members of the commission pose questions concerning the written thesis and lead a discussion on topics of relevance to adult education.</p>
ECGC, Austria*	Relevant professional experience is a prerequisite to enter the programme at all. To acquire the degree of academic expert, one must pass an assessment centre (assessing practical counselling and guidance skills as well as general social skills, as detailed above), an online test at the WIFI

	(testing knowledge skills, as detailed above), and a course at the DUK itself (dealing with research and academic methods), as well as submit a project thesis. To reach a Master's degree, one must attend several further courses, dealing with subject matter as mentioned above, and write a Master's thesis.
BBR, Germany*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualification, certificates, diplomas - Proof of employment as a guidance counsellor - Specific knowledge about educational and professional training systems, occupational profiles and labour market structures in the form of certificates or as a self-report - Certificates or a self-report about the methods the applicant uses in his/her job of career guidance counselling - Commitment to the "Ethical Standards" of the IAEVG/AIOSP

Further examples of evidence in the portfolio are:

- reflections on professional dialogue with clients, peers, colleagues,
- individual critical reflections on practice,
- analysis of client work, individual or group focused,
- analysed practitioner talk (from audio and/or video recording),
- analysed client talk (individual, group and pair),
- analysis of surveys taking account the views of clients and colleagues,
- reflection on and analysis of consultations / group sessions with clients,
- analysis of visual data, artefacts,
- analysed quantitative, statistical data sets, online platforms, websites, activities on social medias etc.

Ideal platform for the quality standard and certification process is online portfolio where reflections of CGP's work, outcomes, achieved descriptors and his/her profile can be edited on long term basis. The quality profile of CGP can be approved by an independent mentor. The mentor if he/she is asked to do so can look at the portfolio and confirm the achieved self-evaluated outcomes and a proof of the quality.

3. The stages of The Certification Process

3.1. Completion of the minimum entry requirements

In order to keep the CP and certification as available as possible it is not appropriate to set entry level requirements what may create barriers to successful certification. This ensures availability and clarity of the qualification standard.

The **minimum entry requirements** are:

- application for certification,
- CGP's professional portfolio that meets the requirements.

Those interested in certification when completing the self-assessment tool may be of the opinion that it would be appropriate to use some thematic modules in order to learn topics in which they see space for development. In addition, he / she can enroll in a group mentoring programme, eventually use individual mentoring.

Table 5. The Certification Process - Entry Requirements

NOLOC, Netherland*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Education and skills in the field of people-oriented services (at least on level EQF-6)- At least 3 years of general work experience- At least the following specific professional experience in the broad field of career advice, career coaching, outplacement and reintegration: - at least 1 year working for at least 18 hours per week- or at least 750 hours of specific professional experience- or at least 25 clients with at least 30 hours of time investment per client- furthermore, the CV shows that you are currently still working in the career profession- CV- Case study- Application (while signing it the candidate states he/she uses self-reflection and works acc. to the Noloc ethical conduct)
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3. 2. The Certification

The CGP interested in the certification is contacted by an evaluator. The evaluator may be a mentor operating in the role of the evaluator and the mentor may be a person who has already completed the certification process and regularly attends education / trainings for mentors. The mentor works with the CGPs and the objective is to reflect on whether their submitted portfolio corresponds to the quality standard descriptors. The mentor can be chosen from publicly available list (e. g. published on the website). A person who acts as a mentor in the CGP's certification process should not act as an assessor for the same CGP.

If the portfolio complies with the descriptors of the standard, the evaluator issues a certificate. The certificate may reflect the level of points earned in the certification and is recommended to issue it time-limited (e.g. valid for 24 months).

Table 6. The Certification Process - Certification Levels

CMI, Netherlands*	The quality standard Registered Career Guidance Professional / RL, has 3 levels: A, B, and C. Differences between levels are mainly in orientation of the career services provided by the individual professional (candidate, candidate and client, candidate and client and organization) and the number of years of (specific) working experience of the individual applying for the quality standard.
WBA, Austria*	WBA Certificate - the wba-certificate is aimed at candidates already working in adult education. To acquire the wba certificate, competences in various fields (see above) must be acquired (30 ECTS credits). The candidates subsequently supply missing qualifications. WBA Diploma - the wba-diploma is aimed at those who specialise in one of the four areas of adult education (either in a teaching, advisory, pedagogically responsible, organizational, managerial or librarianship capacity) and demonstrate a wide range of practically applicable experience as well as theoretical knowledge.

<p>ECGC, Austria*</p>	<p>Applicants must prove a certain level of professional experience before entering the study programme itself, depending upon the desired level of certification and whether or not they have acquired the usual higher education entrance qualifications. In addition, they have to submit a letter of intent.</p> <p>Academic Expert Programme: Admission requires either 2 years of professional experience within the field of career guidance and a general higher education entrance qualification OR 5 years of professional experience without the latter and completed relevant training courses. Afterwards, one must successfully complete the electronic exam, assessment centre and course as mentioned above, and finally submit a project thesis.</p> <p>Master of Arts Programme: Admission to the consecutive Master's programme requires either: a previously acquired academic degree OR a higher education entrance qualification and 4 years of relevant professional experience, relevant training periods included OR 8 years of relevant professional experience, including training periods, without any further qualifications. In case of the latter, admission is granted only after an interview at the DUK. During the programme itself, one must complete three further courses at the DUK, and submit a Master's thesis.</p>
<p>WBH, Germany*</p>	<p>Individuals have to attend a three-day seminar, thereafter they have to submit a written composition and describe their consultation concept as well as two case descriptions. Then they have to pass an oral examination.</p>

3.3 Recertification

The certification itself may be valid for a limited period of time (e.g. 24 months) in sense to assure continuous quality development. Therefore, the recertification process needs to be specified within the providing organisation as well as clarify for the practitioners, e.g. process and requirements of the recertification, possible additional payments.

Table 7. The Certification Process - Recertification

NOLOC, Netherland*	After the initial certification, the professional will need to recertificate every 3 years in order to keep the status 'Noloc Acknowledged Career Professional'. This recertification is based on showing proof of one's own professional development (at least 40 hours per year).
CMI, Netherlands*	<p>The certification procedure and the recertification procedure are alike. The recertification assessment consists of 2 elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Judging the documents / written file handed in by the candidate as proof of meeting the recertification criteria. 2. An interview with the so called review committee, consisting of two members: a Registered Career Guidance Professional (RL) and an independent chairman, being an academic professor in the field of career guidance. <p>In the written file they have to mention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report concerning development advice with reference to the previous (re)certification, - Participations in a course, training, workshop, seminar, conference, modules or systems of structural education or organized meeting with colleagues.
BBR, Germany*	<p>No repetitive control of preconditions such as university diploma, specific knowledge (see 13.), commitment to "Ethical Standards".</p> <p>Recertification though needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - continuing education (specific for subjects and methods to career guidance counselling; a minimum of 60 lesson units), - supervision (a minimum of 20 hrs.), - proof of employment as a career guidance counsellor (regular activity with a minimum of 20 hrs. a month).

4.1 Certification development framework: assuring the quality of career practitioners

The certification framework is being developed as part of ErasmusPlus project 'QUAL-IM-G'. In this project, partners from six European countries – Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Austria, Germany, the United Kingdom, Norway and The Netherlands – worked together with the goal of improving the implementation of quality assurance in career guidance. Noloc, being an expert partner within this project, is responsible for developing the certification development framework presented. Noloc is the Dutch professional association for career guidance professionals and jobcoaches, having almost 3,000 members of whom over half has obtained the Noloc quality mark for career professionals.

Why assuring the quality of career practitioners?

The European labour market is rapidly changing. Flexicurity, robotization, lifelong learning and mobility of labour across borders (national and sectoral) are the main drivers for change and innovation. This not only challenges where and how we work but also when and why we work. In addition, aging Europe results in a working population that has to work longer, asking for more awareness and guidance towards 'second careers'. Added to this is the trend of personalising the learning needed for staying tuned in to the labour market. In short: our work paradigm is in transition, since the importance of jobs is fading and the importance of careers emerges. Career guidance and career guidance professionals are important beacons of light in facilitating this transition for both organisations and individuals.

Individual career guidance practitioners, organisations offering guidance services, and educational institutions are trying hard to keep up with these labour market developments, and fill in their role as beacons of light. What is needed is a clear vision from an educational, social and economic point of view of how to assure the quality of those involved in guiding people into the labour market of the future.

Why a certification development framework?

There are numerous quality marks in the field of career guidance, both for individuals and for organisations. Often, those quality marks are quite difficult to compare, especially in their underlying rationales and considerations. On the other hand, it has proven to be rather difficult to develop coherent quality assurance systems that meet actual needs, since more often than not they are based on desired outcomes – 'it must be ISO' – instead of the underlying needs itself.

In order to meet the combined challenge of a) being able to compare the underlying rationales of existing quality marks in the field of career guidance, and b) being able to develop a coherent, needs-based quality assurance system for career guidance practitioners, the certification framework developed as part of the QUAL-IM-G project is based on three principles:

1. It must be generic enough to deal with specific needs and circumstances of different target groups, sectors or countries;
2. It must be specific enough to grasp the essentials involved in the development of a quality assurance framework specifically targeted on the certification of the profession of ‘career guidance practitioners’;
3. It must focus on actual needs instead of desired outcomes.

To meet those principles, the certification framework developed has two cornerstones:
a) it is based on building blocks, elements that *could* be part of the quality assurance system;
b) it is based on *asking questions*, rather than providing answers.

During the QUAL-IM-G project, the certification framework has been tested in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, both countries that are in the middle of the process of setting up a quality standard for career guidance practitioners for the first time. The framework also forms the basis of integration of the two existing quality marks for career guidance professionals in the Netherlands – the Noloc quality mark and the CMI quality mark – into the development of a new, national quality mark for career guidance professionals.

The foundations of the framework: identifying building blocks

The certification framework for career guidance practitioners – presented in Appendix 1 – consists of seven building blocks, each consisting of one or more sub-blocks:

- Agreeing on the fundamentals of the quality mark
- Agreeing on the professional profile
- Agreeing on the testing framework
- Designing the mentoring process
- Designing the certification process
- Designing the recertification process
- Designing the organizational framework

The framework itself is being built up by providing answers to the questions raised in each sub-block. Providing different answers, will lead to different outcomes and – therefore – different frameworks. This way of developing and implementing makes the framework both a highly flexible concept, as well as a concept that can be fully adapted to local, sectoral or national needs and circumstances.

In this document, an overview of the main questions to be raised when developing a certification framework will be provided, using the structure of building blocks and sub-blocks. Of course, it is up to the certification framework development team to either skip questions or add additional questions.

Building block 1: Agreeing on the fundamentals of the quality mark



Main questions to be raised:

- Who will be the holder of the quality mark?
- What will be the name of the quality mark?
- What will be the target group of the quality mark?
- Will the quality mark be an overall quality mark, or will there be any specializations?
- Will the quality mark constitute different levels – for example basis and senior – of certification?
- What will be the scope of the quality mark? Individuals, organizations, both?
- Will the quality mark be protected from misuse from others? If so, how?
- Will there be a separate register for those who have obtained the quality mark? If so, who will be the holder of this register?
- How long will a certification obtained stay valid? And a recertification?
- What will be the (maximum) cost of the (re)certifying process? And who will pay for it?
- What will be the cost of registering in the register? Is this a one time cost, or annually?

Building block 2: Agreeing on the professional profile



Main questions to be raised:

- Will we develop our own professional profile, or will we adopt an existing one?
- What is our definition of 'the profession'?
- What are the task areas the professionals working in our defined profession deal with? At what level?
- What is the level of education required? What are the disciplines of education required?
- What is the amount of work experience required?
- What are the knowledge areas the professionals working in our defined profession need to master? At what level?
- Which specific tasks the professionals working in our defined profession need to master? At what level?
- Which competences the professionals working in our defined profession need to master? At what level?
- Will we develop a matrix of competences, combining competences per task area? If so, do we also differentiate between levels of mastering per competence and/or task area?
- Which elements of professional attitude are relevant for our profession?

Building block 3: Agreeing on the testing framework



Main questions to be raised:

- Which elements are to be included in the portfolio of the candidate? For example: curriculum vitae, diplomas, certificates, proof of mastering relevant methods/techniques/instruments, case descriptions, recommendations of clients, signed code of conducts, etc.
- In which form the portfolio should be handed in? For example: by e-mail, by post, by a secured system provided by the testing organization, etc.
- What are the educational requirements the candidate should meet, both generic and profession-specific. At what level? How should the candidate prove s/he meets the criteria?
- What is the required work experience, both generic and profession-specific? How should it be proven or demonstrated? By handing in a curriculum vitae? By seeking proof from relevant employers? By providing a list of coachees, including period and time spent on each coachee?
- Are there any compulsory task areas or specific tasks the candidate has to have knowledge of and/or experience with? If so, which task areas or specific tasks? At what level? And how to prove by the candidate?
- Are there any compulsory knowledge areas the candidates should have knowledge of? If so, which knowledge areas? At what level? And how to prove by the candidate?

- Do candidates have to prove they master certain guidance specific methods, techniques and instruments? If so, which guidance specific methods, techniques and instruments? At what level of mastering (basic, profound, expert)? And how to prove by the candidate?
- Do candidates have to prove they master profession-specific competences? If so, what competences? (for example: empathy, effective communication, reflective skills, self-reflective skills, advising, coaching) At what level? And how to prove by the candidate?
- Do candidates have to show they act according to professional standards in terms of attitude? For example, by signing a code of conduct or code of ethics? Do they have to provide examples how they act accordingly? For example, by case studies or by means of an interview with an assessor.

Building block 4: Designing the mentoring process



Main questions to be raised:

- Will a mentor be available to help candidates preparing for their certification?
- What are the requirements of becoming a mentor, if any?
- Will there be an initial mentor training programme for new mentors?
- Will there be an ongoing mentor training for existing mentors?
- What are the requirements of becoming a mentee, if any?
- Will there be a formal mentee programme for mentees?
- Will there be offered individual mentee counselling?

Sub-block 4.1: Mentor requirements



Main questions to be raised:

- What will be the requirements to become a mentor?
- Does a mentor have obtained the quality mark him- or herself?
- Are there any other additional substantive requirements, for example with respect to proven mentoring competencies, being a 'senior' guidance practitioner in terms of amount of guidance specific work experience or dealing with a diversity of client situations, etc.?
- Are there any requirements regarding the amount of time a mentor should be available for mentoring?
- Will there be an initial mentor training programme? For mentors, is it voluntarily or mandatory to attend the initial mentor training, when provided?
- Will there be an ongoing mentor training programme? For mentors, is it voluntarily or mandatory to attend ongoing mentor training activities, when provided?
- Will new mentors be assessed with respect to their suitability of becoming a mentor? If so, how and by whom this assessment will take place?
- Will mentors be financially compensated for their work? If so, how much will they receive? Who will pay for it?
- Will a quality assurance procedure be in place regarding the quality of mentors, and the activities they provide? If so, how does this procedure look like?

Sub-block 4.2: Initial mentor training



Main questions to be raised:

- Will there be an initial mentor training programme?
- What will be the goal of the initial mentor training?
- How is the initial mentor training being provided? Face to face? Blended learning? Online? One session? Multiple sessions? Etc.
- What are the contents of the initial mentor training? What is the pedagogical concept?
- How often will the initial mentor training programme be offered?
- For mentors, is the initial mentor training to be attended on a voluntary basis or is it mandatory?
- How and by whom will the initial mentor training programme be organized?
- What will be the costs of the initial mentor training programme? Who will pay for it?
- Will there be a quality assurance procedure be in place regarding the quality of the initial mentor training programme? If so, how does this procedure look like?

Sub-block 4.3: Ongoing mentor training



Main questions to be raised:

- Will there be an ongoing mentor training programme / activities?
- What will be the goal of the ongoing mentor training / activities?
- How are the ongoing mentor activities being provided? Face to face? Blended learning? Online? Intersession? Supervision? One session? Multiple sessions? Etc.
- What are the contents of the ongoing mentor training activities? What is the pedagogical concept?
- How often will the ongoing mentor training activities be offered?
- For mentors, are the ongoing mentor training activities to be attended on a voluntary basis or is it mandatory?
- How and by whom will the ongoing mentor training activities be organized?
- What will be the costs of the ongoing mentor training activities to be organized? Who will pay for it?
- Will there be a quality assurance procedure in place regarding the quality of the ongoing mentor training programme / activities? If so, how does this procedure look like?

Sub-block 4.4: Mentee requirements



Main questions to be raised:

- Will the mentee programme be open for members only? Will there be different mentee programmes for members and non-members?
- Will the mentee programme be open for all members? Will there be different mentee programmes for different kinds of members?
- What, if any, are the financial conditions that should be met before one can join the mentee programme?
- What, if any, are the other conditions that should be met before one can join the mentee programme?

Sub-block 4.5: Mentee programme



Main questions to be raised:

- Will there be a mentee programme?
- What will be the goal of the mentee programme? Preparation of the portfolio to be handed in? Preparation of the actual assessment? Facilitating broader personal development, whether or not linked to the process of recertification? Other?
- How is the mentee programme being provided? Face to face? Blended learning? Online? One session? Multiple sessions? Group sessions? One-on-one-sessions? Etc.
- What are the contents of the mentee programme? What is the pedagogical concept?
- How often the mentee programme will be offered?
- For mentees, is the mentee programme to be attended on a voluntary basis or is it mandatory?
- How and by whom will the mentee programme be organized?
- What will be the costs of the mentee programme? Who will pay for it?
- Will there be a quality assurance procedure be in place regarding the quality of the mentee programme? If so, how does this procedure look like?

Sub-block 4.6: Individual mentee counselling



Main questions to be raised:

- Will there be provided a possibility for individual mentee counselling?
- What will be the goal of the individual mentee counselling?
- How is the individual mentee counselling being provided? Face to face? Online? One session? Multiple sessions? Supervision? Counselling-upon-request? Etc.
- Will there be any subscribed contents with respect to individual mentee counselling?
- How often will individual counselling be offered to mentees?
- For mentees, is individual counselling taking place on a voluntary basis or is it mandatory?
- How and by whom will the individual mentee counselling activities be organized?
- What will be the costs of individual mentee counselling? Who will pay for it?
- Will a quality assurance procedure be in place regarding the quality of the individual counselling being provided to mentees? If so, how does this procedure look like?

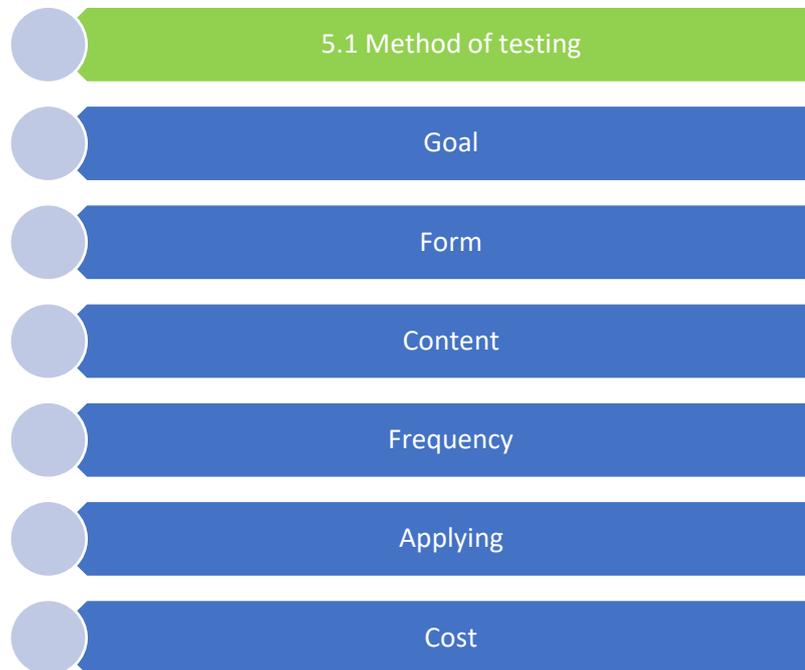
Building block 5: Designing the certification process



Main questions to be raised:

- What method(s) of testing will be used?
- How will the assessment itself take place? How is feedback to the candidate being provided?
- How will the quality of the testing aspects of the certification process be assured?
- What will be the assessor requirements, if any?
- Will there be an initial training programme for assessors?
- Will there be an ongoing training programme / activities for assessors?

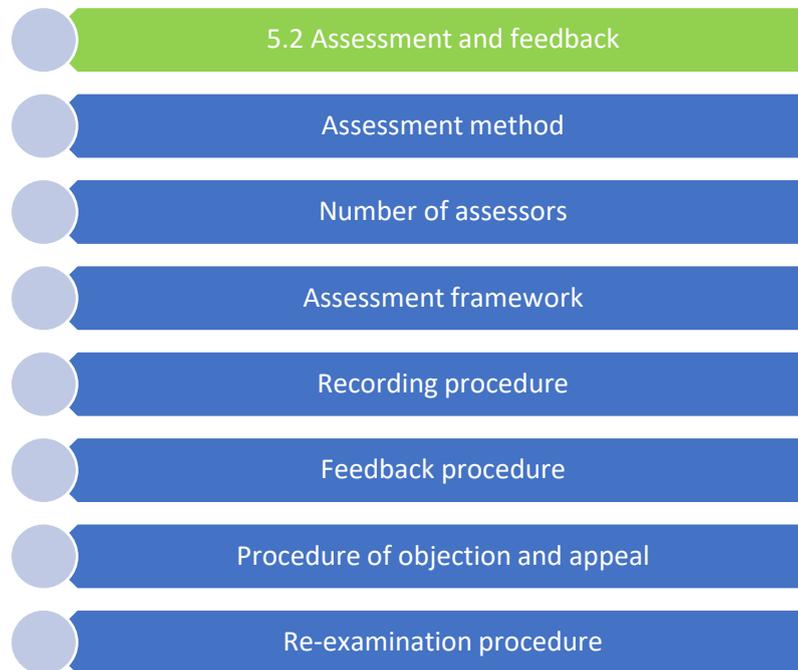
Sub-block 5.1: Method of testing



Main questions to be raised:

- What will be the goal of the testing? For example, to prove/show the candidate meets the requirements being set in the testing framework.
- Which method(s) of testing will be used? For example, by assessing a portfolio, by means of self-reflection, by means of an oral interview, by means of a written exam, or a combination.
- What will be the contents of the actual testing? How it will be decided whether or not a candidate meets the requirements?
- When will the testing be offered? During the year? At certain time periods? On specific moments? At one place? At multiple places? Online? By skype or video-connection?
- How should candidates apply for testing?
- What will be the cost of testing the candidate? How should it be paid? By whom should it be paid?

Sub-block 5.2: Assessment and feedback



Main questions to be raised:

- What assessment methods(s) will be used?
- What will be the number of assessors?
- What will be the assessment framework? Will there be objective guidelines for scoring / interpreting the assessment results? How will they look like? What will be the criteria for failing / passing the assessment? Will they be made clear in advance to the candidate? How?
- How will the assessment results be recorded?
- How will the assessment results be communicated towards the candidate?
- Do candidates have the possibility to object and appeal? By whom? How will the procedure look like?
- When failing, do candidates have the possibility to apply for re-examination? When? How often? How does the re-examination procedure look like? What will be the costs? Paid by whom?

Sub-block 5.3: Assuring the quality of the testing process



Main questions to be raised:

- Which regulations have to be developed with respect to assuring the quality of the testing aspects of the certification process? How will they look like?
- Which procedures have to be developed with respect to assuring the quality of the testing aspects of the certification process? How will they look like?
- What kind of surveillance system has to be developed in order to monitor the quality of the testing aspects of the certification process?
- What are the possibilities of enforcement when the quality of the testing aspects of the certification process is not being met? How does the accompanying procedure look like? Who will have the authority to decide on enforcement measures?
- What assurances are in place that there is a continuous focus on improving the quality of the testing aspects of the certification process? Who is responsible for this process?

Sub-block 5.4: Assessor requirements



Main questions to be raised:

- Are there any requirements to become an assessor?
- Does an assessor have obtained the quality mark him- or herself?
- Are there any other additional substantive requirements, for example with respect to proven assessing competencies, being a 'senior' guidance practitioner in terms of amount of guidance specific work experience or dealing with a diversity of client situations, etc.?
- Are there any requirements regarding the amount of time an assessor should be available for assessing?
- Will there be an initial assessor training programme? For assessors, is it voluntarily or mandatory to attend the initial assessor training, when provided?
- Will there be an ongoing assessor training programme? For assessors, is it voluntarily or mandatory to attend ongoing assessor training activities, when provided?
- Will new assessors be assessed with respect to their suitability of becoming an assessor? If so, how and by whom this assessment will take place?
- Will assessors be financially compensated for their work? If so, how much will they receive? Who will pay for it?
- Will there be a quality assurance procedure be in place regarding the quality of assessors, and the activities they provide? If so, how does this procedure look like?

Sub-block 5.5: Initial assessor training



Main questions to be raised:

- Will there be an initial assessor training programme?
- What will be the goal of the initial assessor training?
- How is the initial assessor training being provided? Face to face? Blended learning? Online? One session? Multiple sessions? Etc.
- What are the contents of the initial assessor training? What is the pedagogical concept?
- How often will the initial assessor training programme be offered?
- For assessors, is the initial assessor training to be attended on a voluntary basis or is it mandatory?
- How and by whom will the initial assessor training programme be organized?
- What will be the costs of the initial assessor training programme? Who will pay for it?
- Will there be a quality assurance procedure be in place regarding the quality of the initial assessor training programme? If so, how does this procedure look like?

Sub-block 5.6: Ongoing assessor training



Main questions to be raised:

- Will there be an ongoing assessor training programme / activities?
- What will be the goal of the ongoing assessor training / activities?
- How are the ongoing assessor activities being provided? Face to face? Blended learning? Online? Intersession? Supervision? One session? Multiple sessions? Etc.
- What are the contents of the ongoing assessor training activities? What is the pedagogical concept?
- How often will the ongoing assessor training activities be offered?
- For assessors, are the ongoing assessor training activities to be attended on a voluntary basis or is it mandatory?
- How and by whom will the ongoing assessor training activities be organized?
- What will be the costs of the ongoing assessor training activities to be organized? Who will pay for it?
- Will there be a quality assurance procedure in place regarding the quality of the ongoing assessor training programme / activities? If so, how does this procedure look like?

Building block 6: Designing the re-certification process



Main questions to be raised:

- How will the re-certification process be organized within the organization?
- What method(s) of testing will be used?
- How will the assessment itself take place? How is feedback to the candidate being provided?
- How will the quality of the testing aspects of the re-certification process be assured?
- What will be the assessor requirements, if any?
- Will there be an initial training programme for assessors?
- Will there be an ongoing training programme / activities for assessors?

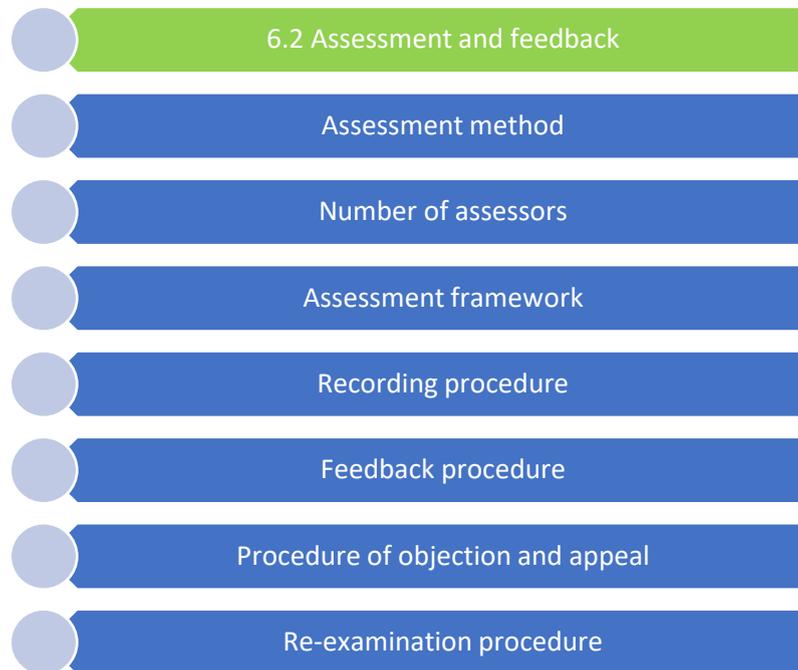
Sub-block 6.1: Method of testing



Main questions to be raised:

- What will be the goal of the testing? For example, to prove/show the candidate has 'grown' in his or her capacity of being a professional career guidance practitioner.
- Which method(s) of testing will be used? For example, by handing in a dossier consisting of one or more elements, by means of an oral interview, by means of a written exam, or a combination.
- What will be the contents of the actual testing?
- When will the testing be offered? During the year? At certain time periods? On specific moments? At one place? At multiple places? Online? By skype or video-connection?
- How should candidates apply for testing?
- What will be the cost of testing the candidate? How should it be paid? By whom should it be paid?

Sub-block 6.2: Assessment and feedback



Main questions to be raised:

- What assessment methods(s) will be used?
- What will be the number of assessors?
- What will be the assessment framework? Will there be objective guidelines for scoring / interpreting the assessment results? How will they look like? What will be the criteria for failing / passing the assessment? Will they be made clear in advance to the candidate? How?
- How will the assessment results be recorded?
- How will the assessment results be communicated towards the candidate?
- Do candidates have the possibility to object and appeal? By whom? How will the procedure look like?
- When failing, do candidates have the possibility to apply for re-examination? When? How often? How does the re-examination procedure look like? What will be the costs? Paid by whom?

Sub-block 6.3: Assuring the quality of the testing process



Main questions to be raised:

- Which regulations have to be developed with respect to assuring the quality of the testing aspects of the re-certification process? What will they look like?
- Which procedures have to be developed with respect to assuring the quality of the testing aspects of the re-certification process? What will they look like?
- What kind of surveillance system has to be developed in order to monitor the quality of the testing aspects of the re-certification process?
- What are the possibilities of enforcement when the quality of the testing aspects of the re-certification process is not being met? How does the accompanying procedure look like? Who will have the authority to decide on enforcement measures?
- What assurance is in place that there is a continuous focus on improving the quality of the testing aspects of the re-certification process? Who is responsible for this process?

Sub-block 6.4: Assessor requirements



Main questions to be raised:

- Are there any requirements to become an assessor?
- Does an assessor have obtained the quality mark him- or herself?
- Are there any other additional substantive requirements, for example with respect to proven assessing competencies, being a 'senior' guidance practitioner in terms of amount of guidance specific work experience or dealing with a diversity of client situations, etc.?
- Are there any requirements regarding the amount of time an assessor should be available for assessing?
- Will there be an initial assessor training programme? For assessors, is it voluntarily or mandatory to attend the initial assessor training, when provided?
- Will there be an ongoing assessor training programme? For assessors, is it voluntarily or mandatory to attend ongoing assessor training activities, when provided?
- Will new assessors be assessed with respect to their suitability of becoming an assessor? If so, how and by whom this assessment will take place?
- Will assessors be financially compensated for their work? If so, how much will they receive? Who will pay for it?
- Will there be a quality assurance procedure be in place regarding the quality of assessors, and the activities they provide? If so, how does this procedure look like?

Sub-block 6.5: Initial assessor training



Main questions to be raised:

- Will there be an initial assessor training programme?
- What will be the goal of the initial assessor training?
- How is the initial assessor training being provided? Face to face? Blended learning? Online? One session? Multiple sessions? Etc.
- What are the contents of the initial assessor training? What is the pedagogical concept?
- How often will the initial assessor training programme be offered?
- For assessors, is the initial assessor training attended on a voluntary basis or is it mandatory?
- How and by whom will the initial assessor training programme be organized?
- What will be the costs of the initial assessor training programme? Who will pay for it?
- Will there be a quality assurance procedure in place regarding the quality of the initial assessor training programme? If so, how does this procedure look like?

Sub-block 6.6: Ongoing assessor training



Main questions to be raised:

- Will there be an ongoing assessor training programme / activities?
- What will be the goal of the ongoing assessor training / activities?
- How are the ongoing assessor activities being provided? Face to face? Blended learning? Online? Intersession? Supervision? One session? Multiple sessions? Etc.
- What are the contents of the ongoing assessor training activities? What is the pedagogical concept?
- How often will the ongoing assessor training activities be offered?
- For assessors, are the ongoing assessor training activities attended on a voluntary basis or is it mandatory?
- How and by whom will the ongoing assessor training activities be organized?
- What will be the costs of the ongoing assessor training activities to be organized? Who will pay for it?
- Will there be a quality assurance procedure in place regarding the quality of the ongoing assessor training programme / activities? If so, how does this procedure look like?

Building block 7: Designing the organizational process



Main questions to be raised:

- How will the certification process be organized within the organization?
- What will be the accompanying organizational design?
- What will be the accompanying roles and responsibilities?
- How will the quality of the organizational aspects of the certification process be assured?
- Will there be a transitional arrangement for holders of an existing quality mark, if any?

Sub-block 7.1: Organizational positioning



Main questions to be raised:

- Will the certification process be organized inside or outside the organization, or both?
- Will the certification process be accredited itself, for example by getting ISO 17004-accreditation?
- Will the certification process be monitored and/or audited on a regular basis by an external auditing organization?
- Will the certification process be monitored and/or audited on a regular basis by the organization itself?

Sub-block 7.2: Organizational design



Main questions to be raised:

- How does the certification process being designed and structured within the organization look like? How are the links with other organizations involved in the certification process be structured and designed?
- What are the processes to be developed to make sure the certification process is being executed effectively and efficiently? What do they look like?
- What are the different organizational roles to be defined with respect to the certification process? How will they relate to each other?
- What are the tasks, responsibilities and authorizations of each roles?
- How does the accountability structure with respect to the people and (internal and external) bodies involved in the certification process look like? What checks and balances have to be put in place? How is this documented?

Sub-block 7.3: Assuring the quality of the organizational aspects



Main questions to be raised:

- Which regulations have to be developed with respect to assuring the quality of the organizational aspects of the certification process? What will they look like?
- Which procedures have to be developed with respect to assuring the quality of the organizational aspects of the certification process? What will they look like?
- What kind of surveillance system has to be developed in order to monitor the quality of the organizational aspects of the certification process?
- What are the possibilities of enforcement when the quality of the organizational aspects of the certification process is not being met? What does the accompanying procedure look like? Who will have the authority to decide on enforcement measures?
- What assurance is in place that there is a continuous focus on improving the quality of the testing aspects of the re-certification process? Who is responsible for this process?

Sub-block 7.4: Transitional arrangements



Main questions to be raised:

- Does the new quality mark replace any existing quality marks?
- If so, will there be a transitional arrangement for holders of the existing quality mark?
- What arrangements have to be made regarding the legal settlements of existing quality marks?
For example, should any existing trademark rights be transferred?
- What arrangements have to be made regarding the organizational settlements of existing quality marks?
For example, should any existing legal entities be liquidated?
- What arrangements have to be made regarding the settlements of the rights and duties of the holders of the existing quality mark?
For example, will there be a transitional arrangement for holders of the existing quality mark in obtaining the new quality mark? For example by means of a general exemption with respect to proving some or all of the new assessment criteria, or by providing the new quality mark to all holders of the existing quality mark.
- In what way will the quality of any eventual transitional arrangements be assured?
- How will all the relevant stakeholders be informed about any eventual transitional arrangement?

References

NOLOC, Netherland	Noloc, beroepsvereniging van loopbaanprofessionals en jobcoaches
CMI, Netherlands	Register Loopbaanprofessional / Registered Career Guidance Professional Issued by CMI, Career Management Institute Netherlands
WBA, Austria	Austrian Academy of Continuing Education (WBA) certificate "Certified Adult Educator"/WBA diploma "Graduate Adult Educator (with focus on counselling)"
ECGC, Austria	European Career Guidance Certificate (ECGC), e.g. academic degrees Academic Expert and Master of Arts (MA) in Educational and Vocational Guidance
BBR, Germany	BBR-BerufsBeratungsRegister (Career guidance Register, Germany)
WBH, Germany	Qualitätsstandards für Beratungspersonen im Feld Bildung, Beruf und Beschäftigung. (Quality Standards for Guidance Practitioners in the Area of Education, Career and Employment) Weiterbildung Hessen e.V. (Adult Education Hessen)

Sources

Dodd, V., Haug, E. H., Hooley, T., & Neary, S. (2019). *Quality Assurance Standards. A synthesis of quality standards across partner countries*. Derby: University of Derby/QUAL-IM-G.

NOLOC (2019). *Certification development framework: assuring the quality of career practitioners*. QUAL-IM-G.

Annex no. 1 - Certification Report - Example



Certification Report

Certification documents	Quality Standards for Career Guidance Practitioners (CGP) Portfolio of the CGP inc. his/her self-assessment questionnaire
Date	
Name / CGP	
Name / assessor	
Certification Result	<input type="checkbox"/> The requirements arising from the certification criteria are met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> It is recommended to grant a certificate for 2 years. <input type="checkbox"/> It is recommended to extend the certificate by 2 years. <input type="checkbox"/> The requirements arising from the certification criteria are not met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> It is necessary to meet repeatedly with the assessor. <input type="checkbox"/> New / modified docs need to be submitted.
Assessor / summary (comments, notes, recommendations, suggestions for improvement)	
CGP / summary (comments, notes, recommendations, suggestions for improvement)	

Assessor's signature

CGP's signature



Certification Report

Observed requirements

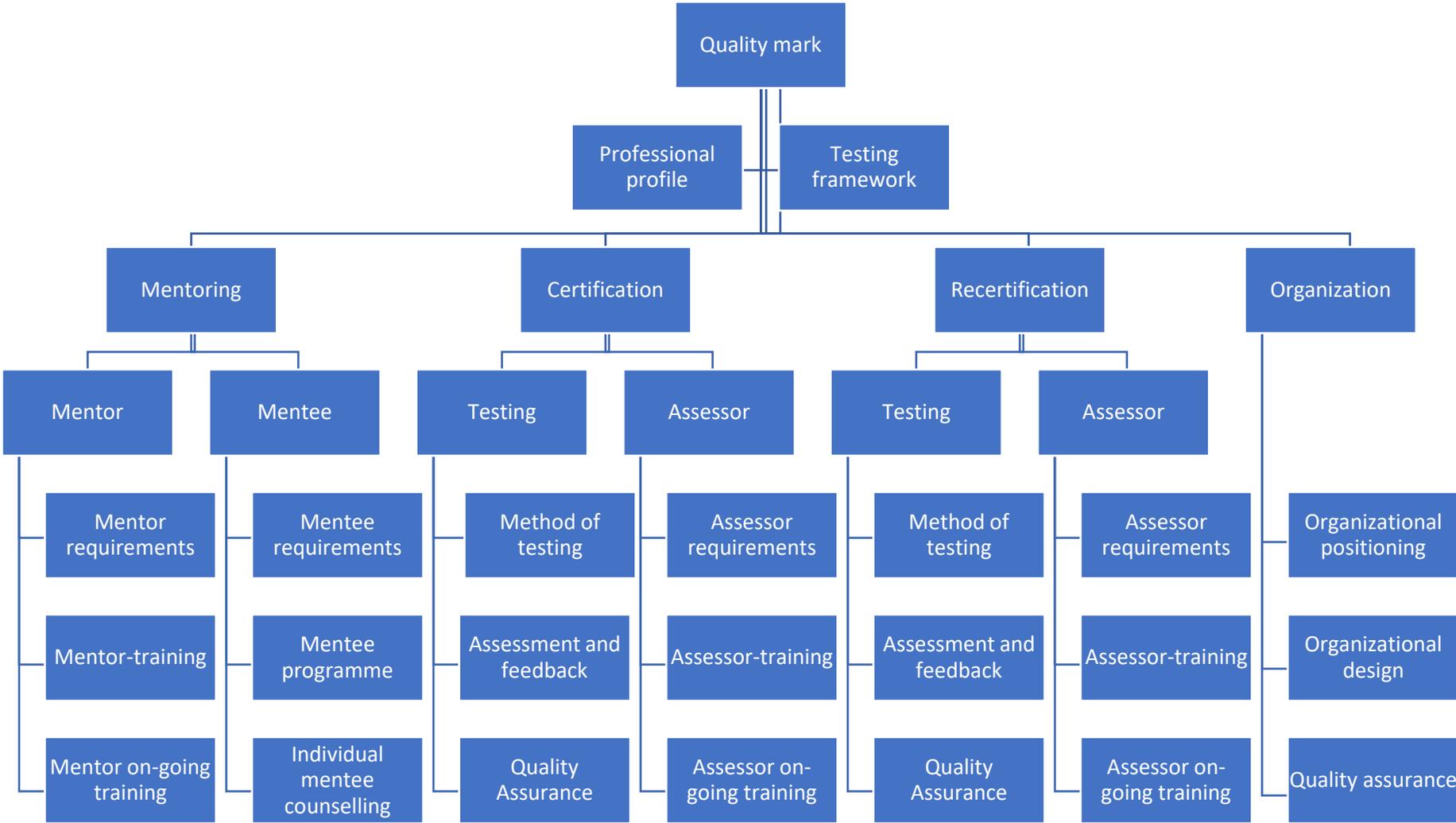
Quality Standards	Compliance (number of points) according to the self-evaluation questionnaire
Total	

CGP Beginner	... points	<input type="checkbox"/>
CGP Experienced	... points	<input type="checkbox"/>
CGP Expert	... points	<input type="checkbox"/>

Overall certification evaluation

	yes	partly	no
The level of compliance with the quality criteria is demonstrated on the basis of the self-assessment questionnaire and the portfolio.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The self-assessment questionnaire and other evidence of the portfolio are reflected in the set goals and the level of their fulfillment is regularly evaluated.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The findings and the potential for development from the last certification have been incorporated. Suggestions for improvement and recommendations have proven effective.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Annex no. 2 - Certification Development Framework



This document was published in 2019 by the partners of the QUAL-IM-G project:

- **Association for Career Guidance and Career Development (ZKPRK)**, Slovakia – association of career professionals and service providers in Slovakia (www.rozvojkariery.sk)
- **BKS Úspech**, Slovakia – career guidance and training provider, ISO certification expert (www.bksuspech.sk)
- **Teamwork for a better future**, Slovakia – non-profit association (www.ozbuducnost.sk)
- **NOLOC**, Netherland - Dutch association for career professionals (www.noloc.nl)
- **German National Guidance Forum in Education, Career and Employment (nfb)**, Germany – coordinator of the national QA system for guidance (www.forum-beratung.de)
- **International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS)**, England - applied research centre specialising in career development and employability (www.derby.ac.uk/research/icegs)
- **ABIF**, Austria - independent social science research and consulting institute (www.abif.at)
- **Association for Career Guidance and Career Development (SKPKR)**, Czech Republic – association of career professionals in Czech Republic (www.sdruzenikp.cz)
- **Inland Norway University of Applied Science (INN)**, Norway – research institution (<https://www.inn.no>)