



## Guidelines and Procedures for Accreditation / Re-accreditation of Conversion Programmes offered by CPA Firms

### 1. Purpose

- To ensure that the programme providers have possessed the required expertise and resources to provide the Conversion Programme.
- To ensure graduates from Conversion Programmes meet the Pre-entry Educational Requirements under the Professional Accreditation System of the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

The Pre-entry Educational Requirements are:-

- (i) (a) A recognised degree from any Hong Kong tertiary institution funded by the University Grants Committee, or accredited by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ); or
- (b) A degree or other academic qualification accepted by Council as being of comparable standard.

and

- (ii) Coverage of graduate competency standards as set out in the attached "Summary of skills, knowledge and competencies appropriate for accounting graduates and graduates of the foundation and conversion programmes" (SSKC) [\[annex a\]](#).

For re-accreditation exercises, the objectives are to: -

- (i) Review whether the performance of the programme graduates in the Qualification Programme demonstrate that they have achieved the competency requirements specified; and
- (ii) To ensure that there are no material changes to the initial programme which may affect the status of accreditation.

### 2. Programme providers

- (i) A tertiary or a non-tertiary institution, such as a commercial provider, "engaged" by a CPA firm in Hong Kong to run the programme for their employees. In this regard, the CPA firm's employees will attend the programme conducted by the programme provider, which is fully responsible for planning, administration, delivery of the programme and assessment, including setting and moderating of examination papers, and marking scripts.

The CPA firm who engaged the programme provider will normally, in the view of the Accountancy Accreditation Board (AAB), have no involvement in the administration and delivery of the programmes; or

- (ii) A tertiary or a non-tertiary institution, such as a commercial provider “working in partnership with” a CPA firm in Hong Kong to run the programme exclusively for their employees. In this regard, the firm will be contracting the programme provider to act as their partner in the delivery of the programme. Both parties will be actively involved in the programme administration and delivery of the programme, which include inter alia, curriculum planning, appointment of teachers, setting and moderation of examination papers, and marking of scripts while the CPA firm will assume a leading role.

### 3. Guidelines for Accreditation

It is expected that graduates of non-accountancy graduates would have acquired many of the generic skills in their undergraduate studies. The focus of the Conversion Programme is therefore on the development of technical knowledge and skills of non-accountancy graduates. Also, the Conversion Programme must have subjects on Hong Kong Law and Hong Kong Taxation. Please refer to the following attached documents for assessment details:

- “Main areas to be considered by the Assessment Team” [\[annex b\]](#)
- “Competency Requirements Questionnaire” [\[annex c\]](#)

### 4. Procedures for Accreditation / re-accreditation

The accreditation will comprise an institutional review and the evaluation of individual programme in terms of its coverage of the competency standards.

- (i) Institutional review - The programme provider “engaged” by a CPA firm in Hong Kong has to undergo an “Institutional Review” conducted by the HKCAAVQ before the Institute would proceed to accredit the Conversion Programme. This institutional review is adopted to ensure quality assurance on the programme and that the provider concerned has the required expertise and adequate resources to offer the programme.

Exemption from the Institutional Review is granted to the providers offering the programme “in partnership with” a CPA firm. In these cases the AAB would rely on the CPA firm to ensure that the provider has the required expertise and adequate resources to offer the programme as well as to monitor the quality assurance of the delivery of the programme, as the programme provider would be held accountable by the firm engaging it to conduct the programme properly and to a standard meeting the Institute’s requirement. Also, it is believed that the CPA firm’s active involvement in all aspects of the delivery of the programme would provide an added assurance on the quality of the programme.

The Board shall reserve the right to determine whether such providers should be classified as “engaged” by or “in partnership with” a CPA firm as part of the review by the Assessment Team.

- (ii) Programme review - The focus of evaluation is on the programme coverage of the desired competencies expected of accounting graduates. The Accountancy Accreditation Board (AAB) of the Institute will nominate an Assessment Team to conduct the programme review on its behalf. The composition of the Assessment Team will be provided to the programme provider for agreement before the commencement of the exercise. The programme provider may request for a change of an Assessor should it perceive a conflict of interest in the Assessor being appointed.

The Assessment Team would make reference to the programme validation / revalidation conducted by the HKCAAVQ in its accreditation / re-accreditation exercise. The Assessment Team will conduct an accreditation visit to the programme provider.

- (iii) Annual accreditation update - The programme providers are requested to complete an annual accreditation update which seeks to ascertain whether any significant changes have occurred in any of the relevant matters affecting each accredited programme and its accreditation status.

#### 5. Accreditation / re-accreditation period

Normally the accreditation period is valid for two years. However, based on the Assessment Team's determination, the period of accreditation for new programmes may be shortened to one year, as appropriate. Normally, successful re-accreditation of the programme should result in the granting of accreditation for a further period of not more than five years, as appropriate.

Programme provider which has already passed the institutional review of the HKCAAVQ will also be required by the Institute, as a condition of the continuation of its accreditation, to apply for and pass HKCAAVQ's institutional review upon expiry of the current HKCAAVQ accreditation.

#### 6. Accreditation / re-accreditation Documentation to be provided by the institution

--- The programme provider applying for accreditation / re-accreditation is requested to provide the documents as listed in the attached "Checklist of materials to be submitted" [\[annex d\]](#).

Programme provider which has already passed the institutional review of the HKCAAVQ is also required to submit the results / report of HKCAAVQ's programme validation to the Institute for its reference. The programme provider must also submit the programme for HKCAAVQ's revalidation before the expiry of the current validation period of the programme. The results / report of the programme validation and revalidation, though not a decisive factor in the Institute's accreditation / re-accreditation of the programme, may be referred to by the Institute in considering the approval of accreditation / re-accreditation for the programme.

7. Advanced Standing / Exemptions

The institution offering the Conversion Programme will be responsible for granting specific exemptions to candidates on the basis of their previous studies. However, this should be within general parameters and limits agreed by the Institute. Records of exemptions granted should be kept for the annual accreditation update or re-accreditation purposes.

8. Contract of Undertaking for Conducting the Accreditation / re-accreditation Exercise

--- The programme provider applying for accreditation / re-accreditation of its programme by the Institute is required to sign a contract of undertaking in the attached form **[annex e]** to confirm:

- (i) its acceptance of the accreditation / re-accreditation guidelines and procedures governing the accreditation / re-accreditation exercise, and
- (ii) its acknowledgement that the decision of the Council of the Institute on any appeal in respect of the accreditation / re-accreditation exercise is final and conclusive.

9. Fees

(i) Accreditation

A fee of \$50,000 will be levied for the accreditation exercise.

(ii) Re-accreditation

A fee of \$50,000 will be levied for the re-accreditation exercise.

No charges will be levied on annual accreditation update, which will be required as part of the accreditation / re-accreditation. No refund of all or part of the accreditation / re-accreditation fee will be given once the accreditation / re-accreditation exercise commences, regardless of the outcome of the exercise. All charges quoted above are subject to review on a regular basis.

10. Review of Outcome and Validity Period for the Accreditation / Re-accreditation Exercise

--- Please refer to the attached "Review of Outcome and Validity Period" **[annex f]** for details.