

ཤེས་ཡོན་ངོས་འཛིན་གྱི་ལམ་སྟོན་ལག་དེབ་ ༢༠༢༡ ཅན་མ།

**GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNITION  
OF QUALIFICATIONS 2021**



འབྲུག་ངོས་འཛིན་ཚོགས་སྒྲེ། དཔལ་ལྷན་འབྲུག་གཞུང་།

**BHUTAN ACCREDITATION COUNCIL**

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**Guidelines for Recognition of  
Qualifications 2021**



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**BHUTAN ACCREDITATION COUNCIL**

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འབྲུག་པོ་མ་འཛིན་ཚོགས་ལྷན།  
**BHUTAN ACCREDITATION COUNCIL**



## Foreword

The Bhutan Accreditation Council (BAC) provides Recognition of Qualifications (RoQ) service to general public for varied purposes. With more aspiring individuals seeking the RoQ service, there is a need for instituting a reliable system that ensures effective and efficient public service delivery.

Towards this, the Guidelines for RoQ have been developed to ensure transparency, professionalism, and objectivity in providing the service. It outlines the principles, requirements and procedures for recognition of qualifications aligned with the Bhutan Qualification Framework (BQF) and international best practices. It primarily guides all stakeholders such as BAC, Quality Assurance and Accreditation Division, awarding bodies, applicants and employing agencies.

It is my sincere hope that this document will create a healthy system in enhancing the quality RoQ service in the country.

Tashi Delek!

(Karma Tshering)  
**CHAIRPERSON**

## Abbreviations

BAC:	Bhutan Accreditation Council
BCSEA:	Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment
BMHC:	Bhutan Medical and Health Council
BQF:	Bhutan Qualifications Framework
CID:	Citizenship Identity
CRA:	Competent Recognition Authority
CWG:	Core Working Group
DAHE:	Department of Adult and Higher Education
DOS:	Department of Occupational Standards
ECB:	Election Commission of Bhutan
HEI:	Higher Education Institution
HEPD:	Higher Education Planning Division
MoE:	Ministry of Education
MoF:	Ministry of Finance
MoLHR:	Ministry of Labour and Human Resources
MS:	Member Secretary
NIC:	National Information Centre
NQF:	National Qualifications Framework
QAAD:	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Division
QEC:	Qualification Endorsement Certificate
RCSC:	Royal Civil Service Commission
RoQ:	Recognition of Qualifications
SOP:	Standard Operating Procedure
SSSD:	Scholarship and Student Support Division

## Acknowledgement

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the members of the Bhutan Accreditation Council for guiding and providing directives to the Secretariat and the Core Working Group (CWG) members. We also offer our appreciation to CWG members for their commitment to revise the Guidelines for Recognition of Qualifications. Our special gratitude is extended to Dr. Singye Namgyel (PhD) for sparing time to proofread and copy edit the revised guidelines. We would like to extend heartfelt appreciation to the members who actively participated in the consultation meetings and provided valuable comments. Without the support and guidance from the department, the division would not have been able to complete review of these guidelines.

### **Members of the Bhutan Accreditation Council**

1. Dasho Karma Tshering, Chairperson, Secretary, MoE
2. Dasho Dhanapati Mishra, Member, Commissioner, RCSC
3. Mr. Kinga Jamphel, Member, Registrar, BMHC
4. Mr. Kunzang N. Tshering, Member, Director, DOS, MoLHR
5. Ms. Jamyang Choeden, Member, Director, BCSEA
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7. Mr. Baburam Sherpa, Offtg. Member Secretary, DAHE, MoE

### **Core Working Group**

1. Mr. Nar Bahadur Raika, Specialist, DAHE
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6. Ms. Nima Lham, Asst. Programme Officer, QAAD, DAHE
7. Mr. Rinchen Thongdrel, Asst. Programme Officer, QAAD, DAHE

## Title

1. This guidelines shall be known as the Guidelines for Recognition of Qualifications, hereafter referred to as the Guidelines.

## Commencement

2. The Guidelines shall come into effect from July 2021.

## Supersession

3. The existing guidelines and notifications in force shall be superseded from the effective date of the Guidelines.

## Authority for Amendment and Interpretation

4. The authority for amendment and interpretation of any provision of the Guidelines shall vest with the Bhutan Accreditation Council, and its interpretation shall be final and binding.

## Introduction

5. The Bhutan Accreditation Council (BAC) was constituted as per the Tertiary Education Policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2010, through an Executive Order issued on 14 June 2011. The Council is the national autonomous body responsible for quality assurance, accreditation, interpretation of Bhutan Qualifications Framework (BQF) and Recognition of Qualifications (RoQ). The Council members are appointed by the Cabinet through Executive Order.
6. The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Division (QAAD), Department of Adult and Higher Education (DAHE), Ministry of Education (MoE), serves as the Secretariat to the Council. In order to fulfil mandates of the Council in providing RoQ service, the Secretariat develops and implements the Guidelines for RoQ.
7. BQF is the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and is the basis to provide RoQ service.

## Rationale

8. The Guidelines for RoQ is developed to:
  - 8.1 serve as reference for all stakeholders such as BAC, QAAD, awarding institutions, employing agencies, and individuals concerned.
  - 8.2 outline principles of recognition and procedure for recognition of academic qualifications.



8.3 provide transparent, effective and efficient services to clients through a reliable system for recognition of academic qualifications.

8.4 support implementation of BQF.

## Scope

9. The guidelines shall be applied for the purpose of recognition of academic qualifications recognition, status of HEIs, and Programmes.

10. RoQ is for purposes such as further studies and employment. For the purpose of professional practice, registration shall be done with relevant Professional Bodies.

## Principles of recognition

11. Recognition of qualifications shall be fair, transparent, and timely based on Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

12. Recognition decisions shall be based on reliable and up-to-date information on recognition status of awarding body, programmes, and the study details of the applicant.

13. The Council shall commit to adopting measures to ensure genuineness and authenticity of the qualifications acquired.

14. Applicant seeking recognition of qualifications must provide accurate information and documentation.

15. Details of RoQ process shall be provided to the individual concerned. Information shall not be released to third party unless there is a written approval from the Council. However, information on any dubious institutes shall be shared with relevant stakeholders and general public.

## Requirements for Processing RoQ

16. The application form (**Annexure I**) along with scanned copies of degree certificate(s) and academic transcript(s), and required documents shall be submitted as per the checklist through the system or official email.

17. In case the documents are in languages other than Dzongkha and English, the applicant shall submit the translated version from the awarding institution.

18. Non-refundable recognition fee as approved by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) shall be deposited in the government revenue account. The proof of payment shall be verified at the Council Secretariat.
19. In case of any discrepancy in citizen details, a letter from the Department of Civil Registration and Census, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs must be produced clarifying the variation.
20. Two copies of the latest passport size photographs have to be submitted - one to be used in the application form and the other for Quality Endorsement Certificate (QEC).

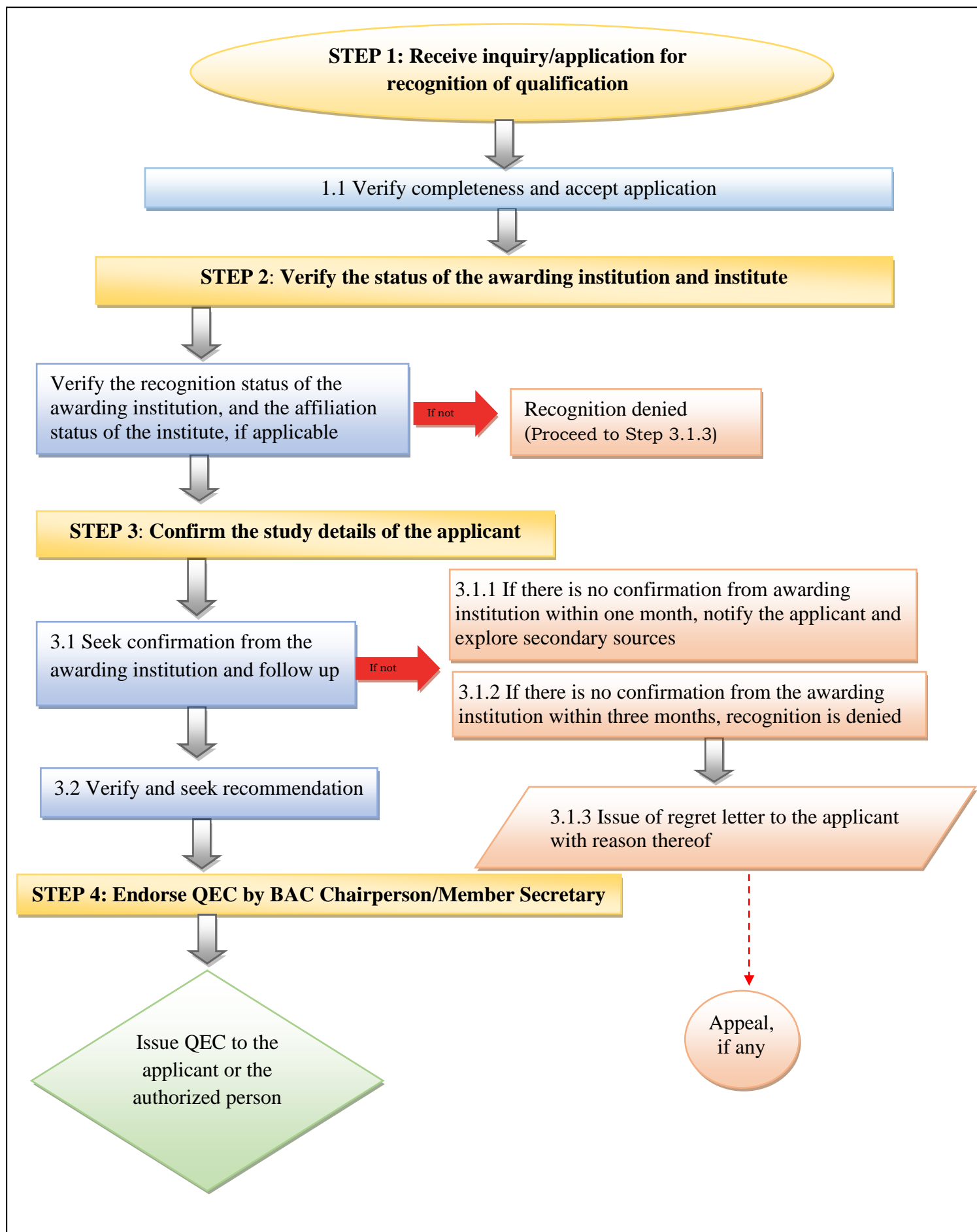
### Procedure for RoQ

21. The applicant may enquire on the RoQ procedure/submit the application form (**Annexure I**) to the Secretariat along with required documents through the system or email.
22. The Secretariat shall receive and scrutinize the documents to ensure its completeness.
23. The Secretariat shall retain scanned copies of degree certificate(s) and academic transcript(s) for future reference.
24. The Secretariat shall verify the legitimacy and recognition status of the awarding institution and verify affiliation status of the Higher Education Institution (HEI) before seeking confirmation from the awarding body.
25. In case the academic awarding institution is not recognized by the host country, request for RoQ shall not be processed and a regret letter shall be sent to the applicant citing the reason(s) thereof.
26. If the awarding institution is recognized by the host country, the Secretariat shall seek confirmation of the study details (*Name of the applicant, programme, college and university, year of study, mode of delivery, and start and end date*) from the awarding institution using the template (**Annexure II**). The email shall be copied to the applicant to enhance transparency.
27. In case there is no response from the awarding institution after one month from the date of seeking confirmation, a formal letter shall be sent to the applicant informing the challenges in getting confirmation and suggesting to follow up personally. Thereafter, possibility of seeking confirmation from secondary sources shall be pursued by the Secretariat.
28. Upon receipt of confirmation from the awarding institution or secondary sources, the Secretariat shall submit documents for verification by head of

the division and seek recommendation from the Member Secretary (MS). The Secretariat shall then prepare QEC (**Annexure III**) and seek endorsement from the Chairperson, or MS in absence of the Chairperson.

29. The confirmation from the awarding institution shall ascertain the following:
  - 29.1 Programme is approved/validated/accredited by a competent recognition authority ensuring that credit hours are fulfilled and learning outcomes are met.
  - 29.2 Degree certificate(s) and academic transcript(s) are genuine/authentic.
30. The Secretariat shall issue QEC to the applicant or the authorized person as per the authorization letter (**Annexure IV**) or by post, as desired by the applicant (*postal charge shall be borne by the applicant*). The Secretariat shall then update information in the database for future reference. The Council members shall be updated on QECs issued and matters related to RoQ, if any, during the subsequent Council meeting.
31. The Secretariat shall suspend the process if there is no response after three months from the date of seeking confirmation and the applicant shall be notified citing the reason(s) thereof. However, after issuing the regret letter, if the Secretariat receives confirmation at a later date, QEC shall be processed and the applicant shall be notified accordingly.
32. In case of recognition being denied, the applicant may appeal formally to the Council through the Secretariat within 10 working days from the date of issuing regret letter.
33. The appeal will be addressed within two months from the date of appeal. The Secretariat will inform the appellant on the decision in writing or any delay thereof.
34. Confirmation may be sought from secondary sources such as competent professional bodies or those registering for professional practice if the awarding institution does not respond within one month of seeking the confirmation.
35. A Second Copy of QEC shall be issued based on the SOP in case of loss or damage or need for change in details. The applicant shall submit the duly filled application for the SECOND COPY of QEC as per **Annexure V**.
36. The above procedure is summarized in the flowchart below:

## Procedure for Recognition of Qualifications



## Procedure for recognition status of HEIs/Programmes

37. The individual or employing agencies seeking recognition status of HEIs/programmes shall write officially through email to the Secretariat.
38. The Secretariat shall verify the legitimacy and recognition status of the HEI/programmes.
39. The secretariat shall officially intimate the individual or agency concerned on the status of their query.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Bhutan Accreditation Council

The Council shall:

40. endorse process and procedures, SOP, and Guidelines for RoQ.
41. provide overall policy directives to the Secretariat and relevant stakeholders to ensure reliable, credible, and smooth RoQ service in the country.
42. collaborate and work closely with relevant Professional Bodies both within and outside Bhutan to enhance credibility and facilitate mutual recognition.
43. establish network and collaboration with regional and/or international quality assurance bodies and HEIs to ensure timely service delivery to the clients.
44. act as arbitrator in case of appeal. The decision of the Council on appeal shall be final and binding.
45. revoke or withdraw QEC in case of false declaration, and enforce legal actions as per the legal provisions of the country.

### Quality Assurance and Accreditation Division

The Secretariat shall:

46. conduct sensitization programmes on RoQ service and orient relevant stakeholders on RoQ guidelines, if required.
47. provide guidance and information on procedures for recognition of qualifications, if required.
48. provide RoQ service to general public based on the guidelines and SOPs in place (**Annexure VI**).

49. liaise/follow up with awarding institutions, competent professional bodies, and relevant stakeholders to ensure timely RoQ service.
50. seek support from relevant agencies, and confirmation from secondary sources, in case there is no response from the awarding institution after one month from date of seeking confirmation.
51. serve as a National Information Centre (NIC) to provide access to relevant, accurate, and up-to-date information on the recognition status of HEIs.
52. Report to the Council on issues and challenges related to RoQ for directives.
53. Implement and follow up on the directives of Council on RoQ.

### Academic Qualifications Awarding Institutions

The awarding institution shall:

54. provide confirmation upon request from the Secretariat to ensure timely issuance of QEC.
55. provide accurate information on the study details of the applicant.
56. maintain a comprehensive, robust, and real-time database of graduates.
57. ensure fulfillment of learning outcomes of programmes as per the NQF.

### Applicant

The applicant shall:

58. comply with the Guidelines for RoQ.
59. submit the application form (**Annexure I**) along with supporting documents as per the checklist.
60. provide accurate information on their qualifications and submit additional information or documents, if required by the Secretariat.
61. render necessary support (e.g., follow up with the awarding institution) and cooperate with the Secretariat for ensuring timely RoQ service.
62. collect QEC in person, through post (*postal charge shall be borne by the applicant*) or delegate an authorized person as per *Annexure IV*.

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## Application Form for Recognition of Qualifications

### IMPORTANT NOTES:

1. Reporting of false information to a lawful authority knowingly and willfully is offence under the law, please submit correct and accurate information.
2. Information must be filled in "Capital Letters".

### 1. Personal information:

Applicant's name:

CID No.

D.O.B (dd/mm/yyyy)

Contact No.

Email ID:

Passport  
size  
photograph

### 2. Educational detail:

Course/qualification:

Type of course **(TICK)**: FULL TIME  PART TIME  MIXED MODE  DE

Duration of the course:

Name of the Institute:

Name of the University:

Website:

Location:

Country:

Student ID No:

Year of completion:

I declare that the particulars furnished above are true to the best of my knowledge. In the event the information declared above is found to be incorrect, I understand I will be subject to legal action(s). I hereby confirm that I have read the guidelines for RoQ and understand the procedures for RoQ.

Affix  
Legal  
Stamp

Signature of the applicant



**For official use only:**

**Checklist of received documents (TICK):**

- 1. Scanned copy of degree certificate(s) and academic transcript(s)
- 2. Two passport size photos
- 3. Receipt of recognition fee (processed through Finance Division, MoE)

The application is received along with all required documents as specified above by:

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dated signature** \_\_\_\_\_

Following the procedure outlined in the Guidelines for RoQ and based on the provisions of the BQF, the qualification of the above applicant is:

Confirmed as genuine with _____ mode of study based on the confirmation received from _____ dated _____. A copy is attached for reference. Additional remarks, if any: _____
---

**Confirmed by:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Verified by: (Head of Division)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Recommended by: (Member Secretary)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated signature \_\_\_\_\_

QEC reference No.:..... is issued on...../...../20.....to the applicant/the authorized person/posted, as requested on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_\_\_.

**Received by:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **CID No.:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Number** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dated signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Seeking Confirmation from Awarding Institution**

Ref. No. BAC/QAAD/07/20\_\_-20\_\_/

Date.....

The Registrar/Dean/Rector  
.....  
.....

**Subject: Study details confirmation for Mr./Ms.....**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Bhutan Accreditation Council is the national autonomous authority for accreditation, quality assurance and recognition of qualifications. Mr./Ms. ....bearing Student/Registration No..... who studied .....(programme) in .....(college) under..... (university).....(country) from .....to.....(year) has approached our office for recognition of qualification.

Therefore, on behalf of the Council, we would like to request you to kindly send the CONFIRMATION LETTER with following details as per your record:

1. Name of the student: .....
2. Name of the programme: .....
3. Name of the college and university:.....
4. Mode of study - Full Time/Part Time/Mixed Mode/Distance Education **(Please mention whichever is applicable):** .....
5. Start and end date of the programme: .....

A copy of the confirmation letter could be scanned and emailed to [qaad@moe.gov.bt](mailto:qaad@moe.gov.bt)

Soliciting your kind support and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

(Name)  
Designation  
**Secretariat, Bhutan Accreditation Council**

**Copy to:**

1. Member Secretary, Bhutan Accreditation Council for kind information.
2. The person concerned for information.
3. Office copy.

Qualification Endorsement Certificate



འབྲུག་ངོས་འཛིན་ཚོགས་ལྷན་ཁག་། དཔལ་ལྷན་འབྲུག་གཞུང་།

**BHUTAN ACCREDITATION COUNCIL**



Recognition Service No. BAC/20 \_\_\_/RS00 \_\_\_

Date:

**Qualification Endorsement Certificate**

Name:

CID No:

Student ID/Registration No:

Name of qualification:

Mode of study:

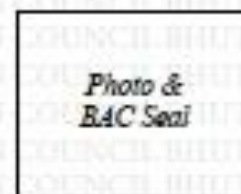
Year of completion:

Name of college:

Name of university:

State/Country:

The above qualification has been verified as genuine and legitimate based on the procedure prescribed in the Guidelines for Recognition of Qualifications and the provisions of the Bhutan Qualification Framework.



**CHAIRPERSON  
BHUTAN ACCREDITATION COUNCIL**

**Authorization Letter**

I, Mr./Ms. ....(Name) bearing CID No. .... from.....(Village).....(Gewog) .....(Dzongkhag) working as..... (Designation) in ..... (Organization), hereby authorize Mr./Ms. .... (Name) bearing CID No. .... D.O.B.....(dd/mm/yyyy) from.....(Village).....(Gewog) ..... (Dzongkhag) working as a....., (Designation) in..... (Organization) to collect my Qualification Endorsement Certificate /SECOND COPY of QEC **(Tick as appropriate)**

I hereby affirm that I take full responsibility and be accountable in case of loss/damage of my Qualification Endorsement Certificate.



Name of the applicant: .....  
Dated signature: .....  
Contact No.: .....

---

**Received by:**

Name of the authorized person: .....  
CID No.: .....  
Dated signature: .....  
Contact No.: .....

---

**For Official use only:**

Issued by  
Name: .....  
Dated signature: .....

**Application Form for SECOND COPY**

**1. Personal information:**

Applicant's name:

CID No.

D.O.B (dd/mm/yyyy)

Contact No.

Email ID:

**2. Educational details:**

Course/qualification:

Name of the University:

QEC No.:

**3. Reason for issue of SECOND COPY:**

Loss/damage  Change of information  Others (specify): .....

Dated signature of the applicant

**For official use only:**

**Checklist of received documents (TICK):**

- 1. Passport size photo
- 2. Proof of payment (same as RoQ fee)

Following the procedure outlined in the Guidelines for RoQ, the application received for the issue of SECOND COPY of QEC is verified to be true.

**Verified by:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Recommended by: (Member Secretary)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated signature \_\_\_\_\_

SECOND COPY of QEC reference No.:..... is issued on...../...../20.... to the applicant or the authorized person.

**Received by:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ CID No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_ Dated signature \_\_\_\_\_

## Standard Operating Procedures

### **A. Facilitate Recognition of Qualifications**

1. Receive application, verify documents, verify the status of awarding institution and institute, and archive the scanned copies of degree certificate(s) and academic transcript(s).
2. Update information in the database (name of applicant; date of receipt of application; seeking confirmation from awarding institution, institute; follow up details, date of confirmation, recommendation sought, printing and signing of QEC, and issue of QEC).
3. Process for study details confirmation from the awarding institution with a copy to the applicant.
4. Follow up with the awarding institution weekly with a copy to the applicant/ write to relevant agencies seeking support such as Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
5. Send status letter on RoQ application to the applicant if confirmation is not received within one month.
6. Explore confirmation from secondary sources after one month.
7. Issue regret letter if confirmation is not received within three months.
8. Upon receipt of confirmation, the Secretariat shall verify the details, the head of the division shall reconfirm and the Member Secretary shall recommend issuance of QEC to the Council.
9. Prepare the QEC and seek endorsement from the Chairperson or Member Secretary in absence of the Chairperson.
10. Intimate and issue the QEC to applicant/authorized person.
11. Update on QAAD database and in the limited access system.
12. Compile list of QEC issued month wise for each year and report to the Department/Council.
13. Update the Council on QECs issued and issues related to RoQ in the subsequent Council meeting.

### **B. Issue of SECOND COPY in case of loss/damage**

1. Receive the application along with proof of payment.
2. Seek recommendation from the MS.
3. Prepare the QEC based on the record in the database and seek endorsement from the Chairperson or MS (in absence of the Chairperson).
4. Intimate and issue the SECOND COPY of QEC.
5. Update on the QAAD database.

### **C. Issue of SECOND COPY in case of change of information (Name/CID No.)**

1. Receive the application along with the proof of payment.
2. Verify the documents and seek recommendation from the MS.
3. Prepare the QEC based on the record in the database, updated information,

and seek endorsement from the Chairperson or MS (in absence of the Chairperson).

4. Intimate and issue the SECOND COPY of QEC.
5. Update on QAAD database and in the limited access system.

**Facilitate Recognition status of HEIs/Programmes**

1. Receive query on the recognition status of HEIs/programmes.
2. Ascertain competent recognition authority of the host country.
3. Check the recognition status (Legality, accreditation, affiliation, and other requirements of the host country) of the HEI with the competent recognition authority.
4. For programme, check whether it is accredited/approved by competent accreditation body or professional body.
5. Intimate the individual or agency concerned on the status of their query.

## Glossary

**Accreditation** refers to the process of assessment and review that enables a higher education programme or HEI to be recognised or certified as meeting the required standards.

**Agency** refers to any relevant stakeholders (e.g., RCSC, ECB, corporations, private firms, etc.) that may be interested to avail the RoQ service.

**Applicant** refers to either an individual or an employee seeking the recognition status of the HEI or seeking the assessment of the genuineness status of qualification held by the individual.

**Authorised person** refers to an individual who has been authorized by an applicant to take responsibilities related to QEC on behalf of the applicant.

**Awarding institution** refers to an institution which has been established through the approval from government/state of the host country to confer qualification.

**Chairperson** refers to the Chairperson of the Bhutan Accreditation Council.

**Competent recognition authority** refers to the body empowered by policies to assess qualifications and make decisions on the recognition of qualifications.

**Council** refers to the Bhutan Accreditation Council which is empowered as the competent national recognition authority.

**Head of Division** refers to the Chief Programme Officer of QAAD who shall be responsible to ensure that due diligence has been carried out by the Secretariat as per the SOP in providing the RoQ service.

**Higher education** refers to post-secondary level education, training or research that is recognised by the competent recognition authorities of a country as belonging to its HE system.

**Higher Education Institution** refers to academic institute/institutions recognised by the competent recognition authorities of the country that provides higher education.

**Higher education programme** refers to a programme recognised by the competent recognition authorities of a country for HE, the completion of which provides a student with HE qualifications.

**Learning outcome** refers to a learner's acquired knowledge and skills upon completion of a programme.

**Member Secretary** refers to the head of the Council Secretariat who is the Member Secretary to the Council.



**Mode of Study** refers to different ways of study such as full time, part time, mixed mode, distance learning, etc...

**National Information Centre** refers to the agency responsible for providing valid and reliable information on the higher education system including recognition status of the HEIs and programmes.

**National Qualifications Framework** refers to a system for classification, and organisation of quality-assured qualifications according to a set of criteria.

**Professional body** refers to an agency established for registration, licensing and regulation of professionals to practice the profession.

**Qualification** refers to any award conferred by a legitimate awarding institution that ascertains the successful completion of a programme.

**Qualification Endorsement Certificate** refers to the certificate issued by the Council confirming the qualification based on the procedures outlined in the guidelines.

**Quality Assurance** refers to an ongoing process of evaluating and enhancing the quality of a higher education system, HEIs or programme to assure the stakeholders that required standards are maintained and enhanced.

**Recognition of qualifications** refers to a formal acknowledgement defined and given by competent recognition authority of the country to ascertain the genuineness of qualifications, HEIs and programmes.

**Secondary source** refers to the alternative source of information (e.g., employing agency, Professional Bodies, etc.), which is reliable and credible to seek confirmation other than the awarding institution.

**Secretariat** refers to the office or officials entrusted with administrative duties, maintaining records, and overseeing or performing secretarial duties for the Council.

**Standard Operating Procedure** refers to a set of step-by-step instructions that describes activities necessary to help staff carry out routine operations to ensure uniformity, efficiency and consistency.