

Guidelines of Certification Application for ECF on Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Financing of Terrorism (ECF-AML/CFT)

Introduction

This document is developed to update the guidelines for the Certification application of the **Enhanced Competency Framework on Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Financing of Terrorism (ECF-AML/CFT)**. It includes information related to (A) Eligibility Criteria, (B) Application Procedure and (C) Certification Renewal Arrangement for the application(s) of the following professional qualifications:

Core Level

- Associate Anti-Money Laundering Professional (AAMLPL)

Professional Level

- Certified Anti-Money Laundering Professional (CAMLPL)

A. Eligibility Criteria

1. Relevant Practitioner

The ECF-AML/CFT is targeted at “**Relevant Practitioners (RPs)**”, engaged by an **Authorized Institution (AI)**¹ under the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) or engaged by any statutory body supervised by the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) to perform AML/CFT compliance roles in its Hong Kong or Macao operation.

The ECF-AML/CFT is **not** intended to cover staff performing other job functions that are incidental to AML/CFT compliance.

Specifically, the following categories of staff **do not** fall within the definition of Relevant Practitioner:

- (a) Staff in AML/CFT compliance function performing solely clerical and administrative duties.
- (b) AML/CFT compliance staff in overseas branches and subsidiary undertakings of locally incorporated AIs. It should however be noted that AIs have a responsibility

¹ An institution authorised under the Banking Ordinance to carry on the business of taking deposits. Hong Kong maintains a Three-tier Banking System, which comprises banks, restricted license banks and deposit-taking companies. Authorized institutions are supervised by the HKMA.

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to ensure relevant staff in overseas branches and subsidiaries receive adequate AML/CFT training, including those applicable in relevant overseas regulatory requirements.

- (c) Regional AML/CFT compliance staff, whether located in or outside Hong Kong/Macao, performing AML/CFT duties in the AI/ any statutory body supervised by the AMCM in Macao that are “merely incidental” to duties performed in their regional role. AIs are expected to adopt a principles-based approach and to support their decisions with sound justifications in determining whether a regional staff member falls within the definition of Relevant Practitioners or not. Appropriate regard should be given to the significance of the AML/CFT compliance role performed by the relevant staff member in the Hong Kong/ Macao operations of the AI/ any statutory body supervised by the AMCM in Macao.

Details of the respective roles are classified by a two-level qualification structure (i.e. Core Level and Professional Level). Please refer to HKMA’s circular on ["Enhanced Competency Framework on Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Financing of Terrorism"](#) dated 22 March 2018 for details.

2. Other Certification Requirements

(a) AAMLPL:

- Completed the training programme and passed the examination for the Core Level (work experience is not a prerequisite for obtaining the Professional Qualification); or
- Grandfathered based on the required work experience upon the launch of the Core Level module; or
- Holder of the Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialist certification or completed the International Diploma in AML awarded by the Association of Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialists and the International Compliance Association and completed the bridging training programme and passed the examination offered by the HKIB in collaboration with HKU SPACE (work experience is not a prerequisite for obtaining the Professional Qualification).

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(b) CAMLP:

- Completed the training programme and passed the examination for the Professional Level and have at least 3 years of work experience in AML/CFT compliance; or
- Grandfathered based on the required work experience upon the launch of the Professional Level module; or
- Holder of the Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialist certification awarded by the Association of Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialists and the International Compliance Association and completed the bridging training programme and passed the examination offered by the HKIB in collaboration with HKU SPACE and have at least 3 years of work experience in AML/CFT compliance; or
- Holder of the International Diploma in AML awarded by the Association of Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialists and the International Compliance Association and passed the bridging training programme offered by the HKIB in collaboration with HKU SPACE and have at least 3 years of work experience in AML/CFT compliance.

B. Application Procedure

1. Please follow the application procedure below:

- (a) Complete all the necessary fields in the relevant Certification Application Form for ECF-AML/CFT, including applicant's signature and HR endorsement in relevant sections.
- For Core Level: AML-G-023
 - For Professional Level: AML-G-025
- (b) Obtain endorsement from the Human Resources Department (HR) of the concerned Authorized Institution(s) with signature of Head of HR or equivalent and company chop on the HR Verification Annex of the above Application Form. **Applications can only be accepted with HR endorsement included.**
- (c) Applicants are required to fill in **ONE** set of HR Verification Annex form for **EACH** relevant position/functional title in the application.

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Als are expected to support their staff's application for certification. Regarding information related to the RPs previous employment(s), current employer is encouraged to provide necessary assistance to the RPs in the latter's applications for ECF certification (e.g. by confirming whether such information is consistent with the curriculum vitae provided by the RP at the time of job application). If required, the HKIB may request applicants to provide employment records or additional information to substantiate their applications.

- (d) Read the [Privacy Policy Statement](#) set out on HKIB's website before submitting applications.
- (e) Send the completed Application Forms with HR department's endorsement, relevant supporting documents (e.g. copy of your HKID / Passport and copies of the examination result(s)) and payment evidence to the HKIB.

2. Fee Payable

- (a) A **Non-refundable** fee is required for **AAMLP/CAMLP** certification application.
- (b) For details, please refer to the Fee Table of the respective ECF which is available on the HKIB's website.

3. Payment Method

- (a) Paid by Employer
- (b) A crossed cheque or e-cheque made payable to "The Hong Kong Institute of Bankers".
(Post dated cheques will not be accepted.)
- (c) Credit card (Visa or Mastercard).

4. Submission of Application

Please complete and submit the **SIGNED** application form together with the required documents via email to cert.gf@hkib.org or by post/ in person to The Hong Kong Institute of Bankers (HKIB) at the following address:

"Certification Application for ECF-AML/CFT"

Department of Programme Implementation and Professional Certification
The Hong Kong Institute of Bankers

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3/F Guangdong Investment Tower
148 Connaught Road Central, Hong Kong

Note: Please ensure sufficient postage is provided when sending out the required documents.

5. Approval and Election

- (a) The certification processing time, including the election process done by the HKIB committee members, will require **approximately 2 months**. If grandfathering is also applied together with certification by using the combined application form, the processing time will be **approximately 3 months**.

- (b) Upon the successful completion of the certification process, **AAML/CAML** holders will be registered as **Certified Individuals (CI)** and be included in a public register on the HKIB's website. The HKIB will also grant the holder a professional membership. **AAML/CAML** professional qualification holders are then entitled to print the professional qualification on their business cards and curriculum vitae to signify their professional excellence. They will also be awarded a **digital scroll** through the HKIB's Digital Credential System, which serves as an official and shareable recognition of their achievement, enabling them to showcase their achievement to peers, employers and industry stakeholders, and affirming their readiness to excel in the banking profession.

- (c) Besides, the professional qualification holders' names will also be presented on the HKIB website and published in the Institute's journal "Banking Today" and Annual Report.

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C. Certification Renewal Arrangement

Subject to the HKIB membership governance, if the applicant wants to maintain his/her AAMLP/CAML P professional qualification (PQ), he/she is required to renew his/her certification annually and maintain a valid membership status with the HKIB. The applicant must meet the annual Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements and pay the Certification Renewal fee. As from 1 January 2026, applicant is eligible for certification renewal regardless of his occupation upon renewal application. Applicant may apply for certification renewal even he/she is not an RP upon renewal application.

1. **AAMLP/CAML P** holders are bound by the prevailing rules and regulations of the HKIB as stipulated in the HKIB Members' Handbook. **AAMLP/CAML P** holders are required to notify the HKIB of any material changes in their applications for certification renewal, including their contact details. The HKIB may investigate the statements **AAMLP/CAML P** holders have made with respect to their applications, and that they may be subject to disciplinary actions for any misrepresentation (whether fraudulent and otherwise) in their applications.
2. To maintain ongoing professionalism and up-to-date knowledge of the latest AML/CFT risks, compliance developments, and local and international regulatory requirements and standards, **AAMLP/CAML P** holders are required to fulfil the following minimum CPD requirements:
 - (a) **AAML P** - a minimum of **10 hours of verifiable CPD** in each calendar year (ending 31 December), of which at least **5 hours** should be on the topic of AML/CFT while the remaining CPD hours should be on compliance (including financial crime compliance), legal and regulatory requirements, risk management and ethics.
 - (b) **CAML P** - a minimum of **12 hours of verifiable CPD** in each calendar year (ending 31 December), of which at least **6 hours** should be on the topic of AML/CFT while the remaining CPD hours should be on compliance (including financial crime compliance), legal and regulatory requirements, risk management and ethics.

Any excess CPD hours accumulated within a particular year cannot be carried forward to the following year.

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3. PQ holders are required to self-declare their CPD compliance to the HKIB at the time of certification renewal. Documentary evidence should be kept for random audit by the HKIB. The minimum 10 (Core Level)/ 12 (Professional Level) CPD hours requirements will be subject to periodic review in light of the latest developments in the banking sector. For details, please refer to the HKIB's website (<https://www.hkib.org>)
4. The certification renewal of **AAML/CAML** is subject to fulfilment of the annual CPD requirements starting from the calendar year (**from 1 January to 31 December**) following the year of certification.
5. The annual CPD requirements are applicable to PQ holders who gained the designation by Trainings and Examinations or Grandfathering.
6. The CPD requirements are waived in the first calendar year (**ending 31 December**) of certification.

For the avoidance of doubt, PQ holders who are captured under multiple PQs are only required to fulfil the CPD hours for one of his/her certifications per year (i.e. whichever is greater).

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