



"A quality code for APL"

**Identifying and accrediting a lifetime
of learning
English version**

The APL code:

- The goal of APL is to define, evaluate and accredit individual competencies.
- APL primarily answers to the need of the individual. Entitlements and arrangements are clearly defined and guaranteed.
- Procedures and instruments are reliable and based on solid standards.
- Assessors and supervisors are competent, impartial and independent.
- The quality of the APL procedure is guaranteed and is being improved on an ongoing basis.

November 2006

Welcome Dear Colleague,

The Dutch Knowledge Centre APL is happy to introduce to you the quality code for APL. National actors, among which APL providers, employers and accreditation bodies, have joined hands to develop a quality code for APL. Based on existing quality methods and the Common European Principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning, an APL code has been developed which enables all actors in the Netherlands to bring APL to a higher quality level. We hope to inspire our colleagues at European level.

On 14 November 2006, at the occasion of the 6th national APL conference in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, all parties involved undersigned the covenant which introduces the quality code for APL.

The covenant is a contributing factor to three objectives linked to the introduction of APL:

1. Increasing the accessibility of APL. Clarifying what APL is and how APL must be offered.
2. Providing transparency. Allowing better comparison of different APL procedures.
3. Guaranteeing civil effect.

Subsequently, the Knowledge Centre APL is facing new challenges linked to the introduction of the quality code for APL. The APL providers should be accredited and monitored. Assessors need to be trained and assessed on their own skills.

In case more colleagues or countries are interested to learn about the quality code, we may consider to organise a study trip to our Knowledge Centre APL to discuss the quality code for APL.

Apart from the quality code you will find in this document:

- Standardisation for assessing APL providers
- Checklist APL Procedures for organisations

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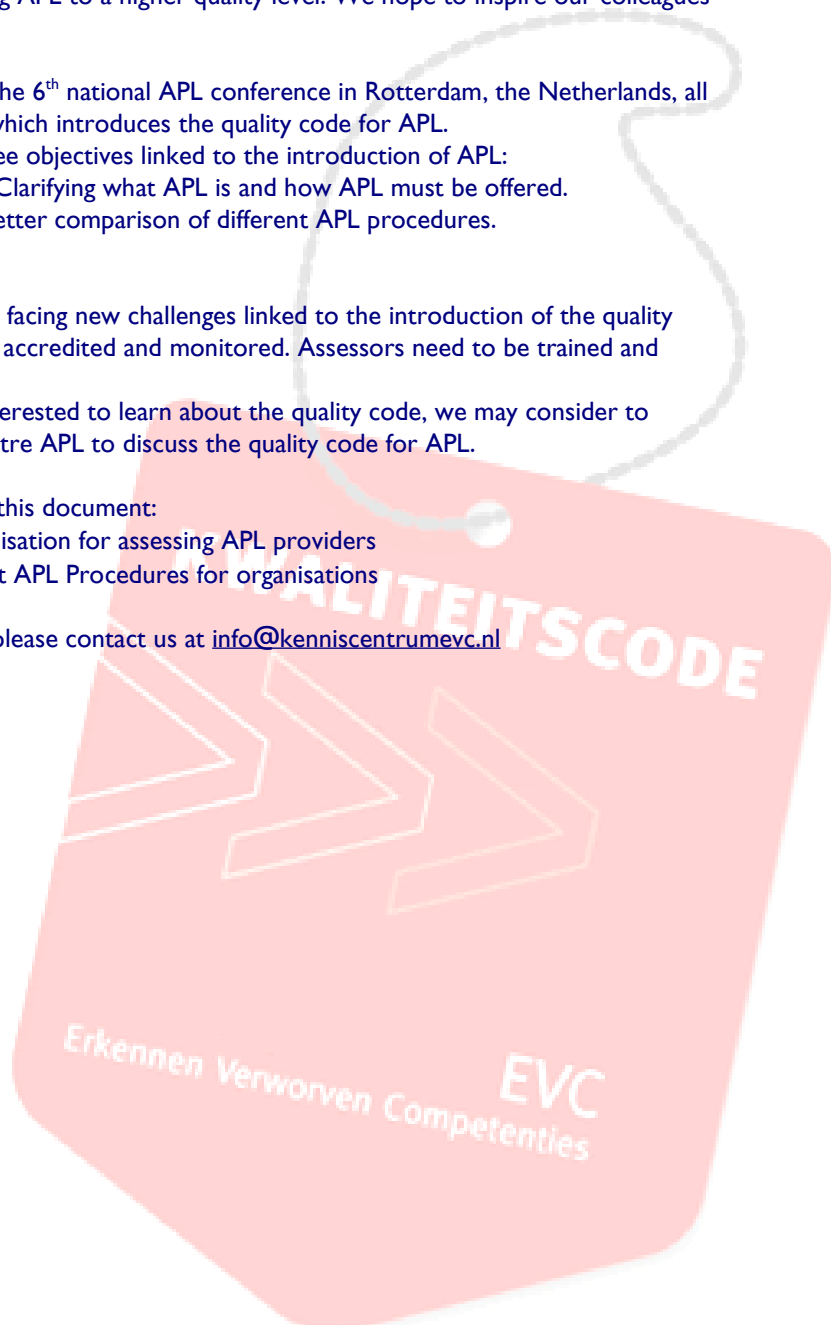
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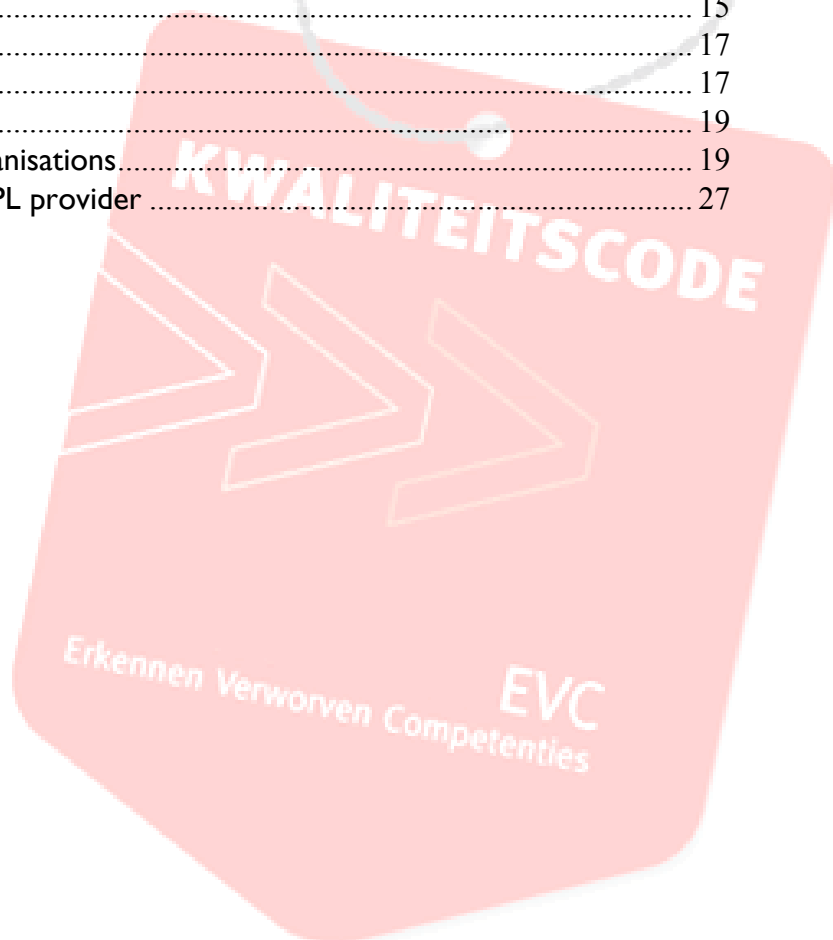
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I The voluntary quality code for the Accreditation of Prior Learning

I.1 Introduction to the covenant

The history of APL in the Netherlands starts in the nineties. At that time Dutch government and social partners came to the insight that employees could no longer count on life time employment with one employer. Career steps became normal and national stakeholders thought of defining life time employment no longer in terms of job security, but in terms of work security. In these discussions the idea of recognition of prior qualifications (EVK) was born. A few number of industries made a successful start with this instrument. In 2000, Dutch government, together with social partners, decided to stimulate the broader concept of accreditation of prior learning (APL).

Government stimulated APL but made no regulations. It was expected that the market itself would find out about the best way to develop, implement and use APL. This policy, called 'let a thousand flowers bloom', generated a lot of experience as well in educational institutes as in sectors of industry. Recently, larger organizations in the Netherlands have found out about APL. It appears that APL is earning its place in the areas of HRM and reintegration processes. APL gives support to increase the chances and broaden the options of both employers and employees (both job-holders and job-seekers) on the labour market. APL helps people to connect working and learning in new ways.

The coming years, Dutch government invests more than 30 million Euros in APL and infrastructure for APL.

New questions arise at this stage. Although Dutch organisations built up a lot of experience, the majority of employees and unemployed could not get access to APL yet. Worse, most of them were never informed about the possibility. The structure of APL is settled in the Netherlands, but in practice the approach to APL is too diverse. The absence of regulations made the users of APL start to doubt about the differences in quality of all those APL procedures. "How can I really be sure that I can trust this provider of an APL procedure?" and "Will the results of this APL procedure be recognised everywhere?" are concrete questions posed by employees and employers, questions that have given us food for thought. They even prompted us to guarantee the quality of APL. Otherwise an excellent tool like this *could* become a victim of its own success, e.g., if buyers and providers were to place speed and a low price above quality. At the Work Summit, 2006, the Dutch cabinet and government, employers and trade unions therefore agreed as follows:

"The Cabinet will promote the APL Knowledge Centre's development of a quality framework for the APL procedure with broad support across all relevant parties and one resulting in a covenant between the government and the parties on the use of this framework."

This document is the covenant resulting from a broad consultation process among all stakeholders. The Common European Principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning were useful as basic information in the writing process. Main arrangements that the parties agreed upon are:

- The use of the code is voluntary, but the signing parties are dedicating themselves to promote the use of APL. Making its use mandatory would detract from the motivation to work with the APL code.
- Everyone who starts with an APL procedure agreed on the reasons for doing so. APL is not a standard process but an individualized series of arrangements customised on the goal and use of APL. Custom work is the standard.
- Every APL procedure ends with an APL report. This report states that the individual has documentation of the competencies he possesses. This makes APL something independent of the educational provider.

- Accredited APL providers are listed in a directory.
- The competencies of the people supervising these procedures and performing the assessments are documented. Only professionals can be supervisors or assessors.
- The quality of APL procedures is always being improved, both at the level of the providers of APL and at the level of the code itself. The more we can raise the profile of APL, the higher the quality standards we can set.

1.2 The text of the covenant

The following parties undersign the covenant:

Stichting van de Arbeid, the Labour Foundation, is a national consultative body organised under private law. Its members are the three peak trade union federations and three peak employers' associations in the Netherlands,

Colo is the Association of Centres of Expertise on Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market. The core tasks of these centres are the innovation and maintenance of the qualification structure, the monitoring and promotion of the quality of learning in professional practice and joint responsibility for the quality of examinations,

PAEPON is the Platform of Accredited Private Educational Institutions in the Netherlands,

The Centre for Work and Income (CWI) signs in part on behalf of the SUWI partners UWV (National organisation for reintegration and temporally income unemployed people), VNG (Association of Netherlands Municipalities) and Divosa (Association of managers with municipal services in the fields of work, income and social welfare). These organisations are, in chain connected, responsible for the reintegration of short and long term job-seekers,

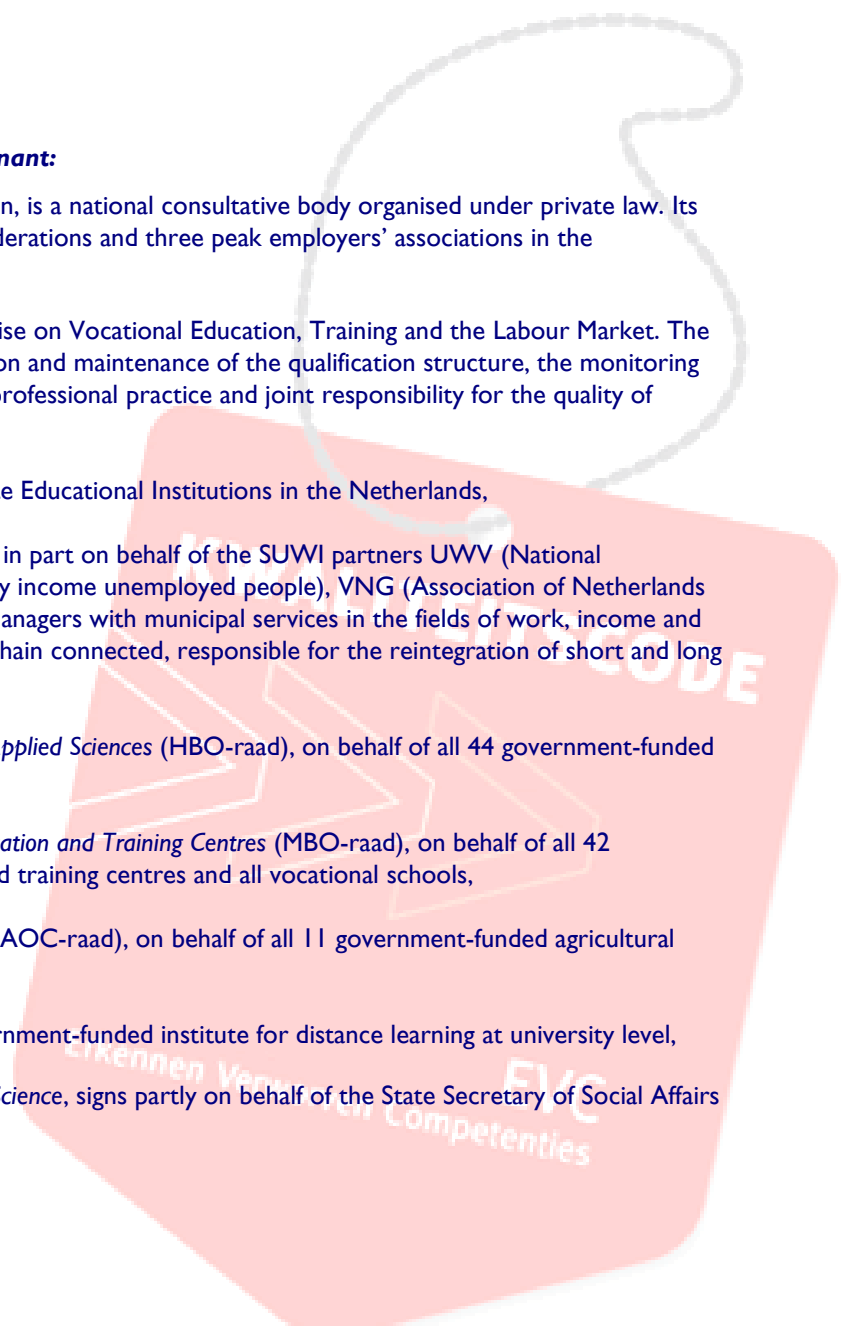
The Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (HBO-raad), on behalf of all 44 government-funded Universities of Applied Sciences,

The Netherlands Association of Vocational Education and Training Centres (MBO-raad), on behalf of all 42 government-funded vocational education and training centres and all vocational schools,

The Council for Agricultural Education Centres (AOC-raad), on behalf of all 11 government-funded agricultural education centres,

The Open University is the independent government-funded institute for distance learning at university level,

The State Secretary of Education, Culture and Science, signs partly on behalf of the State Secretary of Social Affairs and Employment.



Definitions

1. **APL: Accreditation of Prior Learning**
Accreditation: the act of bestowing civil effect on acquired competencies, based on an independent evaluation.
Prior: all learning and competencies that an individual has assimilated, regardless of form of learning.
Learning: the human developmental capacity to act in certain situations in an appropriate, effective and reasoned manner to achieve results.
2. **APL procedure:** all activities for the performance of APL in accordance with the APL code. APL procedures can be structured in a variety of ways and configured for the environment in which they are to be performed. Every APL procedure results in an APL report.
3. **APL report:** a document setting out the results of an APL procedure. The APL report describes the learning and competencies of the participant as compared against the operative standard.
4. **Accredited APL provider:** an organisation that offers APL procedures following the principles and premises of the APL code, and as such is entered in the directory of accredited APL providers. 1
5. **Evaluating organisation:** At present, KCEI and the VBIs² (organisations listed as such by NVAO³) are the organisations designated to evaluate whether an organisation is one working in accordance with the APL code. Social partners in sectors and/or industries, SUWI chain partners and professional organisations can choose their own evaluating organisation for the evaluation of whether an organisation is working according to the APL code. 4
6. **Civil effect:** relates to the opportunities on the national or European labour market opened to the participant after completing the APL procedure. Examples are admission to professional groups or training programmes.
7. **Quality code:** this covenant sets out the quality code for APL, in which the principles and premises of the quality of APL procedures are established. The full name we use is "Quality Code for APL," and in short we refer to this as the "APL code."

Whereas,

1. the use of APL is increasing steadily, and diversity in APL procedures is expanding. At present, everyone going through an APL procedure has an interest in being able to know the quality of the process before they start. The parties wish to establish arrangements on the quality of the APL procedures.
2. during the 2006 Work Summit on 1 December 2005, the Dutch cabinet and the social partners agreed that "the cabinet will promote the APL Knowledge Centre's development of a quality framework for the APL procedure with broad support across all relevant parties and one resulting in a covenant between the government and the parties on the use of this framework."

1 KCE: *Kwaliteitscentrum Examinering* (Quality Assurance Centre for Examinations) evaluates the quality of the exams of all vocational education programmes of institutions (subsidised, private and exam institutions) with a licence against the national standards.

2 VBIs: Visiting and Evaluation Institutions that evaluate the program at the behest of the institution in higher education. The NVAO reviews this external evaluation of the VBIs.

3 The NVAO (Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders) independently warrants the quality of higher education in the Netherlands and Flanders by means of evaluating programmes and issuing a quality mark, and contributes to improving this quality.

4 Whether this evaluating organisation must also have the approval of the government is still being discussed between the parties. The parties wish to reach agreement on this point by 14 November 2006.

3. at the European level, the Netherlands has already formulated objectives for improving the educational level of people between the ages of 25 and 64; these objectives are known as the "Lisbon goals." These goals were drafted in 2000 with the objective of making Europe into a competitive knowledge economy within ten years. APL is one of the paths to the achievement of this goal.
4. the parties consider the creation of the APL code an important step. The parties want to promote, but not mandate, its use.
5. As from 1 January 2007, the government will be extending a tax facility to APL purchasers. In order to qualify for this tax scheme, the APL purchaser must be able to submit an invoice from an accredited APL provider.

The parties agree as follows:

1. the parties endorse the principles and premises concerning the quality of APL as set out in the APL code
2. this APL code is further developed into a review framework. On 1 January 2007, this framework will be adopted by the parties. The evaluating organisations can use this review framework to produce an assessment of the quality of the APL procedures.
3. This APL code is a contributing factor to three objectives linked to the introduction of APL:
 - a. Increasing the accessibility of APL. Clarifying what APL is and how APL must be offered.
 - b. Providing transparency. Allowing better comparison of different APL procedures.
 - c. Guaranteeing civil effect.
4. All organizations that offer APL and opt to profile themselves with the APL code must be accredited providers. An organization is accredited as an APL provider by means of a report by an evaluating organization. An "accredited APL provider" is entered in the directory of the accredited APL providers.
5. The accreditation of APL providers :
 - Organizations offering public programmes and/or examinations for MBO (senior secondary vocational education) for those programmes can have themselves provisionally registered as *accredited* APL providers without first being evaluated by an evaluating organization.
 - organizations offering public programmes and examinations for the HBO (higher professional education) can have themselves provisionally registered as *accredited* APL providers without first being evaluated by an evaluating organization.

Any organization wishing to become provisionally accredited must submit a signed statement to the APL Knowledge Centre declaring that it meets the requirements for an accredited APL provider.

 - Other APL providers (e.g. private providers) can also have themselves registered as "accredited APL providers." To do this, they must submit the evaluation report of the evaluating organization to the APL Knowledge Centre.

On the basis of the report, the organization can be entered into the directory of accredited APL providers.
6. An APL procedure is a method of identifying the extent to which a person possesses certain competencies. These competencies may be rated in relation to a job standard, educational standard or professional standard. An APL procedure results in an APL report, which gives an overall comparison of the individual's competencies against the standard levels of those competencies (Appendix 1). This APL report has an independent value to the individual, and can result in:

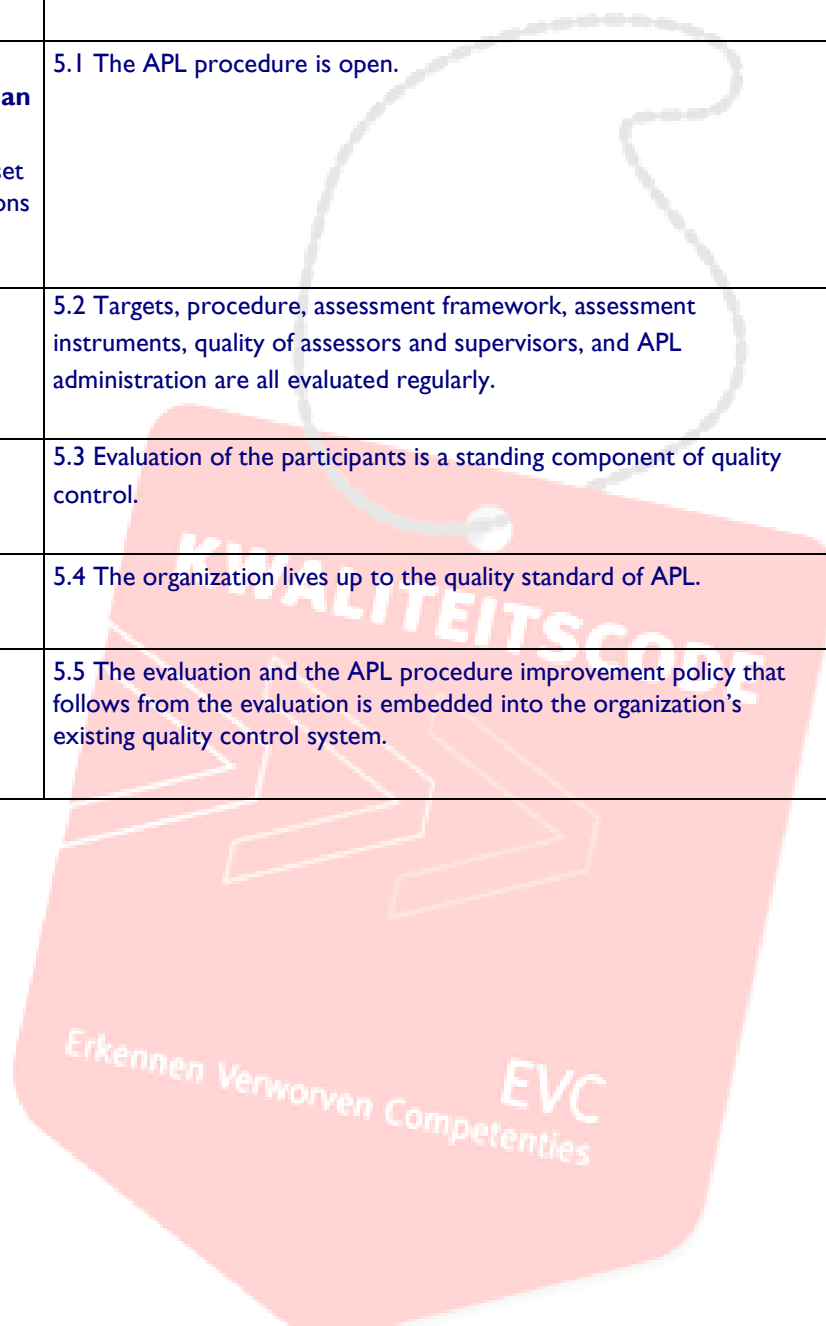
- i. improvement or retention of the labour market position.
 - ii. exemption from the requirement to follow elements of a private training programme accredited by the sector, industry, SUWI chain partner or professional group.
 - iii. obtaining a private diploma, certification or partial certification accredited by the sector, industry, SUWI chain partner or professional group. In this case, a follow-up programme is not required.
 - iv. exemption from the requirement to follow elements of a public training programme accredited by the Minister of Education, Culture & Science/Agriculture, Nature & Food Quality.
 - v. obtaining a public diploma, certification or partial certification accredited by the Minister of Education, Culture & Science/Agriculture, Nature & Food Quality. In this case, a follow-up programme is not required.
7. APL can be the start of an individualized educational programme in pursuit of a diploma or certification. It cuts the programme fees borne by the employer and is a source of motivation to the employee or potential employee. APL may not be made a mandatory part of an educational programme, and it has an independent value to the individual.
8. The parties wish to promote the use of APL and the APL quality code amongst their members.
9. Until the end of 2007, the APL Knowledge Centre will coordinate the implementation of the quality code. The APL Knowledge Centre will perform, minimally, the following tasks in this implementation:
 - a. Set up, publish and administer the directory of accredited providers.
 - b. Publish the texts of the APL code and administer the corresponding standards.
 - c. Develop sample APL reports, portfolios and supporting tools. Investigate whether this will require making arrangements linked to the APL code.
 - d. Produce a model methodology to evaluate the quality of supervisors and assessors. Investigate whether this will require making arrangements linked to the APL code.
 - e. Investigate the effects and the impact of the APL code measured against the objectives linked to the introduction of APL (accessibility, transparency and civil effect).
 - f. Investigate whether the designation of evaluating organizations and the corresponding accreditation of APL providers under the responsibility of social partners in industries or sectors, or of the SUWI partners in the SUWI chain or in professional organizations, is actually happening. Investigate how the evaluating organizations proposed by the social partners are applying the APL code and the standards. Have an initial impartial and independent evaluation performed of the quality model and the use of the APL code.
 - g. Before 1 July 2007, the Knowledge Centre APL will write a letter with recommendations to the parties based on the above mentioned subjects. The discussion of this evaluation by the parties will include the determination of who will take on those tasks of the APL Knowledge Centre relating to the APL code in 2008 and thereafter.

2 APL Quality Code

Code	Details of implementation
<p>1. The goal of APL is to define, evaluate and accredit individual competencies.</p> <p>The accreditation of prior learning has a value in and of itself and contributes to employability. In many cases, APL can be a benefit to further career-related personal development.</p>	<p>1.1 A goal is explicitly linked to the APL procedure.</p>
	<p>1.2 The APL-supplying organization and each individual reach consensus on the use of the results of APL.</p>
<p>2. Individual entitlements: the APL process answers to the need of the individual. Entitlements and arrangements with the APL-offering organizations are clearly defined.</p>	<p>2.1 The accessibility of the APL procedure for participants is documented.</p>
	<p>2.2 Participation in the APL procedure is generally on a voluntary basis.</p>
	<p>2.3 The APL-offering organization and the participants make arrangements on the optimal course of the APL procedure.</p>
	<p>2.4 The participant decides whether he/she will participate in the APL procedure and will receive all relevant information needed to do so.</p>
	<p>2.5 Time frame for the entire procedure is realistic, feasible and known in advance.</p>
	<p>2.7 The privacy of the participant is guaranteed and the results of the APL procedure are the property of the participant unless agreed otherwise in advance.</p>
	<p>2.7 The participant is entitled to appeal, and there is a system in place for this option.</p>

Code	Details of implementation
<p>3. Procedure and instruments are reliable and based on solid standards</p> <p>Trust is the key issue. Trust has to do with civil effect, properly defined standards, and clear information on the way in which assessments are conducted and the arguments on the basis of which conclusions are drawn.</p>	<p>3.1 Tasks and capacities of all parties involved in all phases of the procedure are known and are functioning.</p>
	<p>3.2 A standard coordinated to the relevant working area and which leads to the civil effect is used.</p>
	<p>3.3 The equivalence of the APL procedure with an initial vocational training programme must be demonstrated.</p>
	<p>3.4 The reliability and validity of the assessment instruments and procedures used is guaranteed, even if procured externally.</p>
	<p>3.5 The assessment instruments make use of any available evidence, no matter what the source.</p>
	<p>3.6 The participant is entitled to a concluding meeting to be informed of the result. This result, including the civil value of the result, is set out in an APL report.</p>
<p>4. Assessors and supervisors are competent, independent and impartial</p> <p>Independence and impartiality are crucial factors in the evaluation and are rooted in the roles and responsibilities of the assessors involved in the process. It is of major importance to avoid unnecessary confusion of roles. Impartiality can be reinforced by training and the use of networks.</p>	<p>4.1 The independence of the assessors is guaranteed.</p>
	<p>4.2 The roles of supervisors and assessors are separate.</p>
	<p>4.3 The supervisors have a proven track record of competence. They are able to present procedures and to interview, coach and give feedback to individuals; they are professionals in the fields in which their coaching specializes.</p>
	<p>4.4 The assessors have a proven track record of competence. They are able to interview, give feedback to individuals and evaluate competencies; they are able to communicate assessment results; they are professionals in the fields in which they conduct assessments.</p>

Code	Details of implementation
	4.5 Supervisors and assessors keep their professional skills up.
<p>5. The quality of APL procedures is guaranteed and is being improved on an ongoing basis</p> <p>The quality of the APL procedure and the set of instruments used is guaranteed. Evaluations are conducted regularly. The results are incorporated into improvement actions.</p>	5.1 The APL procedure is open.
	5.2 Targets, procedure, assessment framework, assessment instruments, quality of assessors and supervisors, and APL administration are all evaluated regularly.
	5.3 Evaluation of the participants is a standing component of quality control.
	5.4 The organization lives up to the quality standard of APL.
	5.5 The evaluation and the APL procedure improvement policy that follows from the evaluation is embedded into the organization's existing quality control system.



3 Standardisation for assessing APL providers

3.1 Assessment of APL providers

To become an accredited APL provider and to maintain accreditation, your APL procedure must be assessed by an assessment organisation. This assessment is needed to be included in the register of Accredited APL providers. This document is the model of the assessment that assessment organisations use when working for organisations that would like to become accredited APL providers. You need a statement from an assessment organisation for each course of training or occupational qualification. You will receive a clear statement. At the end of the assessment, the assessment organisation will tell you whether the APL procedure is in agreement with the APL code. It will provide you with a report of all deviations it observes. This memorandum includes the multiphase plan, the working method and the standardisation that are used for the assessment.

You may already be included in the register with provisional accreditation as an APL provider. In that case, you will need this procedure to convert your status from provisional accredited provider to accredited APL provider.

Your organisation must satisfy a number of conditions before starting this assessment procedure:

1. You have an APL offer and the accompanying APL procedures are described;
2. You have completed your APL offer on the Knowledge Centre APL / Kenniscentrum EVC website. You have also indicated when you would like to have the APL procedures assessed;
3. You have performed a self-evaluation. This is possible, for example, by using the 'Checklist of APL procedures: for organisations' (Appendix 2) or another checklist. You have concluded from the checklist that your APL procedures sufficiently correspond with the APL code.

The assessment procedure then appears as follows:

4. You make an appointment with an assessment organisation that can and may assess your APL procedure(s) (you will find a list of organisations that can perform this role on the Knowledge Centre APL website). If applicable, you can also request to have the APL procedure(s) assessed during a regular audit.
5. You choose the standard level at which you would like to be assessed, depending on how your organisation has organised APL:
 - assessment by APL methodology linked to a training course;
 - assessment of a number of APL methodologies as a cluster;
 - assessment of all of the APL methodologies of the institution.
6. You send your self-evaluation and supporting documents to this assessment organisation. If the assessment organisation believes that your APL procedure deviates too much from the APL code, the investigation stops here. You will receive a substantiated report (Appendix 3).
7. If the investigation proceeds, the assessment organisation will conduct an audit at your organisation during one or more meetings. The assessment organisation will also conduct a random check for each training course / professional profile.
8. The assessment organisation documents the results of the assessment in a report on its findings. The report includes the parts where your procedure satisfies the code and where it deviates from the code. The report is accompanied by a letter from the assessment institution, stating whether the procedures have satisfied the APL code.
9. If the assessment institution believes you satisfy the APL code, you send a copy of the letter to the Knowledge Centre APL. The Knowledge Centre APL registers you as an Accredited APL provider and confirms this by letter.

If the assessment procedure does not immediately lead to the expected result, it can be repeated:

10. If your procedure deviates too much but the assessment organisation concludes that you can satisfy the APL within a reasonable period of time (within a year), you can request or extend a provisional accreditation. You should then send a copy of the letter with the findings of the assessment organisation to the Knowledge Centre. If you state the date on which your procedure will satisfy the APL code, you will receive an (extension of) the provisional accreditation.
11. If your procedure deviates too much from the code, you may consider postponing the accreditation request. If you have a provisional accreditation at that time, you must inform the Knowledge Centre APL of this. Any previously issued provisional accreditation will be withdrawn by the Knowledge Centre APL.
12. As soon as you believe that your procedure corresponds with the APL code you ask your assessment organisation to come by again and draft a report. This report entitles you to be included by the Knowledge Centre in the register of Accredited APL providers.

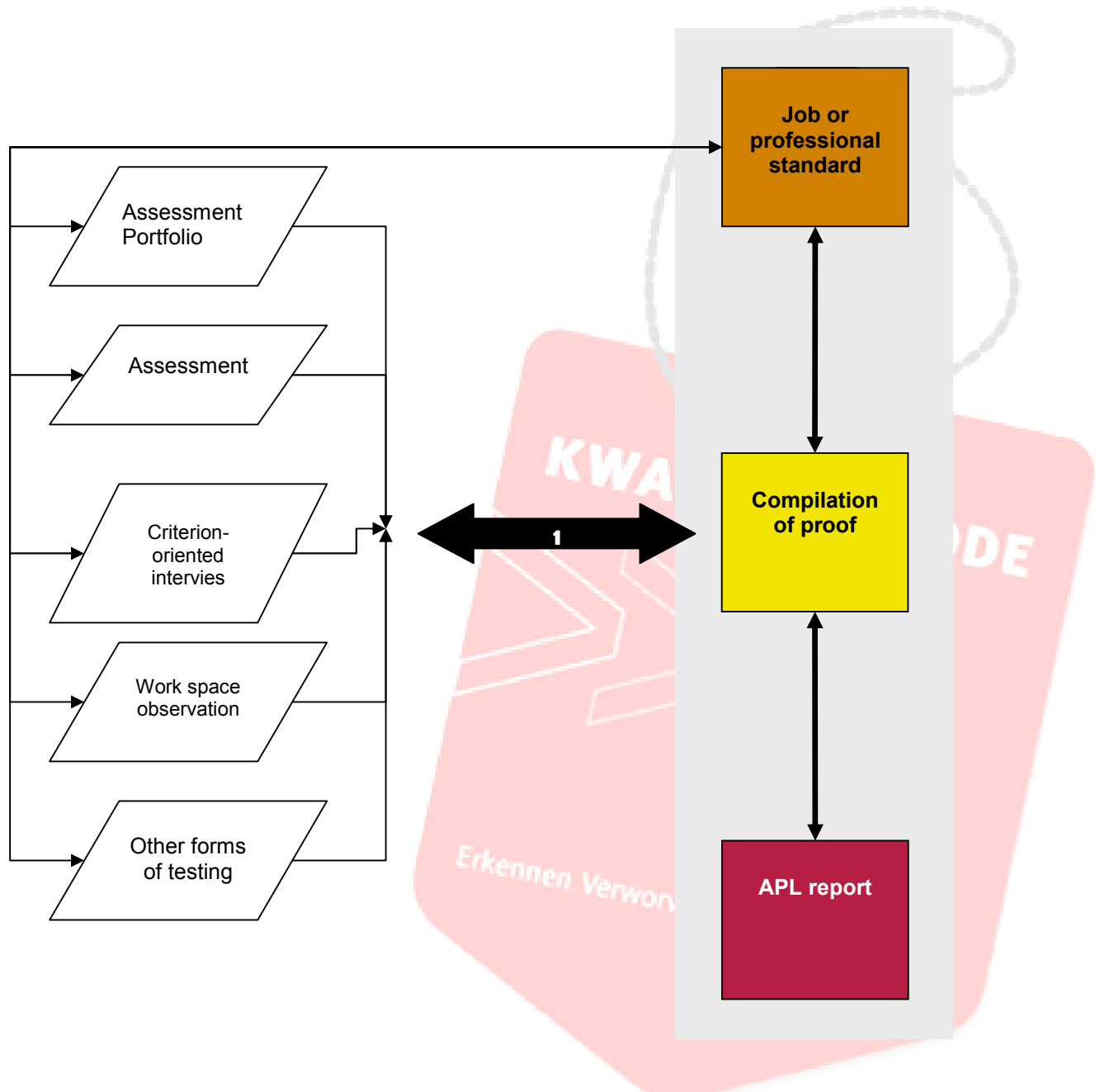
3.2 Instruments for self-evaluation

You will see a model for self-evaluation (the 'Checklist APL procedure: for organisations) on the Knowledge Centre APL website (Appendix 2). You can use this model to gain insight within your organisation on the quality of your APL procedure. However, there are other checklists in circulation that can be used for this purpose. If you have completed the evaluation, you have substantiated your procedure and have provided proof. This checklist can be used to check where your APL procedure still requires adjustments. You can make these adjustments before you have an assessment organisation examine your APL procedure. That way you limit the time and expense for the assessment.



3.3 Working method to assess APL procedures

An APL procedure is a procedure to accredit prior acquired competences in relation to the personal ambitions of the candidate and the chosen job or professional standard. This results in a report, based on an independent assessment. The model below describes how the quality of APL procedures can be supervised. It is a conceptual model that does not outline the forms of testing.



The basic assumption is that the accreditation is made for the candidate with a suitable nationally recognised competency profile and is conducted properly and independently.

The collection of proof is assessed at number 1 in the above model. It also examines the extent to which the collected proof covers the competences in the nationally accredited competency profile (the job or professional standard). Assessment organisations use the following definition of proof:

Proof is used to substantiate the judgement. A similar judgement would result upon repetition.

Proof must be relevant, authentic and current. Relevant means that the proof refers to the competences in the nationally recognised competency profile that fits with the candidate's career. Authentic means that the proof refers to the APL participant.

If the compilation of proof satisfies the set criteria, the results are documented in an APL report.

3.4 Standardisation APL code

The covenant, "A quality code for APL", states that the APL code is further detailed in a standardisation. This standardisation shall be established by the signatories of the covenant. The text below includes the standardisation referred to in the covenant. This standardisation is a draft and is valid until August 2007. Based on practical experience, the standardisation will be evaluated on a regular basis and adjusted when necessary. Any future adjustments to the standardisation shall have no repercussions for the (period of) validity of assessments already conducted.

Organisation and implementation of APL is a complex process that must leave room for learning from experiences that APL providers acquire with their cooperative partners. In short, the focus will not only be on quality control but also on developing collaborative partnerships between APL providers and the organisations where people work or organisations that help people with employment.

The APL code is developed into the norm text below. The official text of the APL code is reported before each norm text for illustration purposes.

1. The objective of APL

APL code 1: The objective of APL is to clarify, appraise and recognise present competences in individuals. The recognition of acquired competences has a value in and of itself and contributes to employability. In many cases, APL leads to further career-related personal development.

Norm: Before the start of the procedure, agreements are made with candidates about the objective associated with the APL procedure for the candidate. This is the broader objective in relation to the candidate's career prospects and/or the objectives of the organisation offering APL. The APL provider is responsible for all cooperating parties, so that all activities are coordinated to the candidate's objective. The objective of APL is described for each participant in written quantifiable criteria and is in relation to the candidate's career prospects.

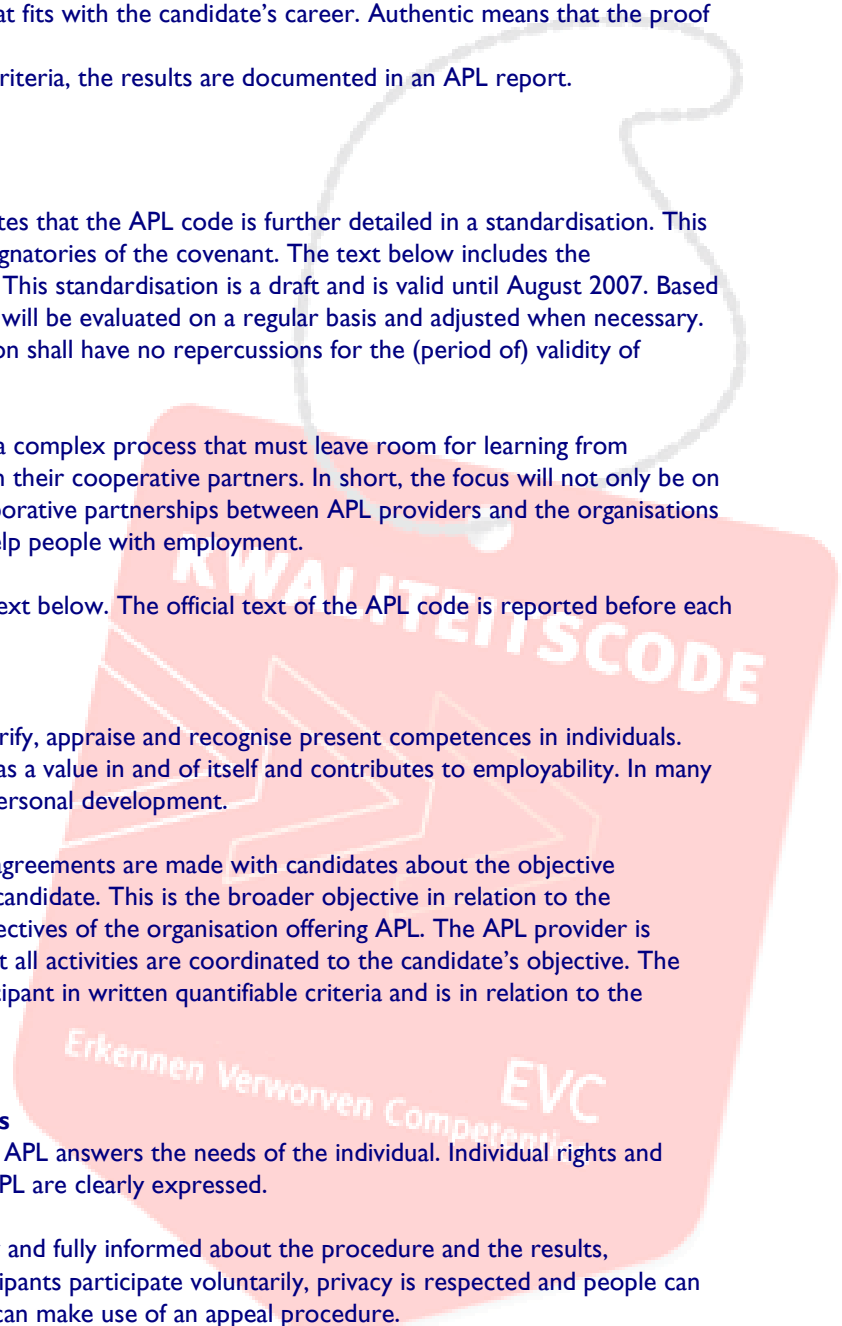
2. The competences of the participants

APL code 2: Competences of participants: APL answers the needs of the individual. Individual rights and agreements with the organisation offering APL are clearly expressed.

Norm: (Potential) participants are properly and fully informed about the procedure and the results, accessibility is the same for everyone, participants participate voluntarily, privacy is respected and people can lodge complaints, as necessary. Candidates can make use of an appeal procedure.

3. Procedures and instruments

APL code 3: Procedure and instruments are reliable and based on proven standards. Trust is the key concept. Trust has to do with civil effect, well-defined standards, clear information about how assessments are conducted and the arguments on which conclusions are drawn.



Norm: Instruments are specifically designed to clarify competences that are acquired through formal and non-formal learning.

Data used in the procedure are sufficiently relevant, current, varied and authentic to serve as proof. Criteria are included in the APL procedure. A set of tools is available where these data still have to be tested.

Another assessor with the same materials would have to come to the same conclusion. Each APL procedure results in an APL report that states the participant's competences in relation to the nationally recognised job or professional standard and in relation to the individual career objectives.

4. Expertise of assessors and supervisors

APL code 4: Assessors and supervisors are competent, independent and unbiased. Independence and impartiality are critical factors within the assessment and are embedded in the roles and responsibilities of the assessors involved. Unnecessary mixing of roles must be avoided. Impartiality can be reinforced through training and through the use of networks.

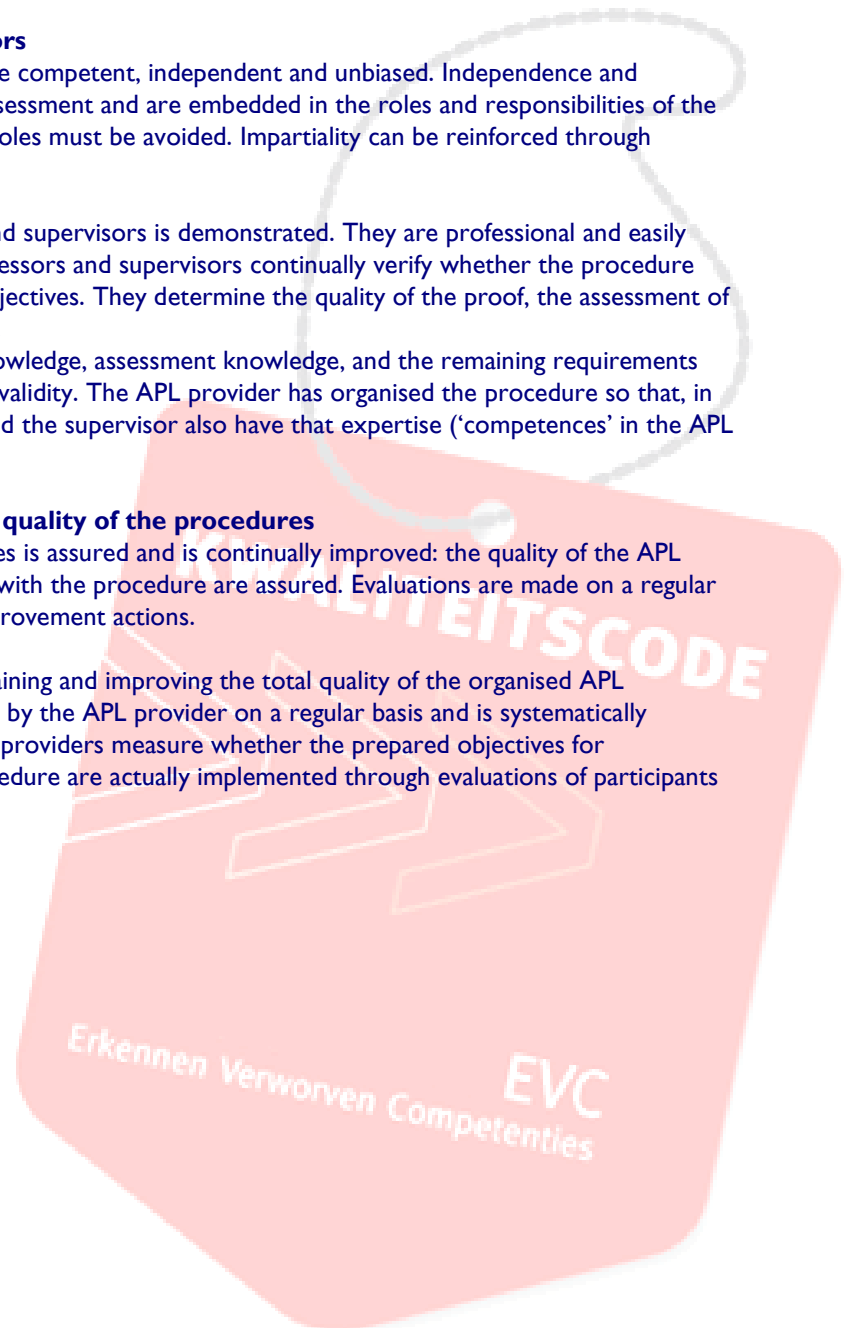
Norm: Expertise of assessors (deciders) and supervisors is demonstrated. They are professional and easily assessed on the required competences. Assessors and supervisors continually verify whether the procedure meets and continues to meet the agreed objectives. They determine the quality of the proof, the assessment of the competency profile and the APL report.

The expertise refers to the professional knowledge, assessment knowledge, and the remaining requirements for transparency, relevance, objectivity and validity. The APL provider has organised the procedure so that, in retrospect, it can verify that the assessor and the supervisor also have that expertise ('competences' in the APL code) and that they maintain this expertise.

5. Assurance and improvement of the quality of the procedures

APL code 5: The quality of APL procedures is assured and is continually improved: the quality of the APL procedure and the set of instruments used with the procedure are assured. Evaluations are made on a regular basis. The results are incorporated into improvement actions.

Norm: Evaluations are prepared for maintaining and improving the total quality of the organised APL procedure. The APL procedure is evaluated by the APL provider on a regular basis and is systematically integrated in procedures and routines. APL providers measure whether the prepared objectives for participants that are linked to the APL procedure are actually implemented through evaluations of participants and cooperating parties.



Appendix I
APL report



Candidate information

Name candidate:
 Date of birth:
 Social security number:

Candidate's objectives

The standard

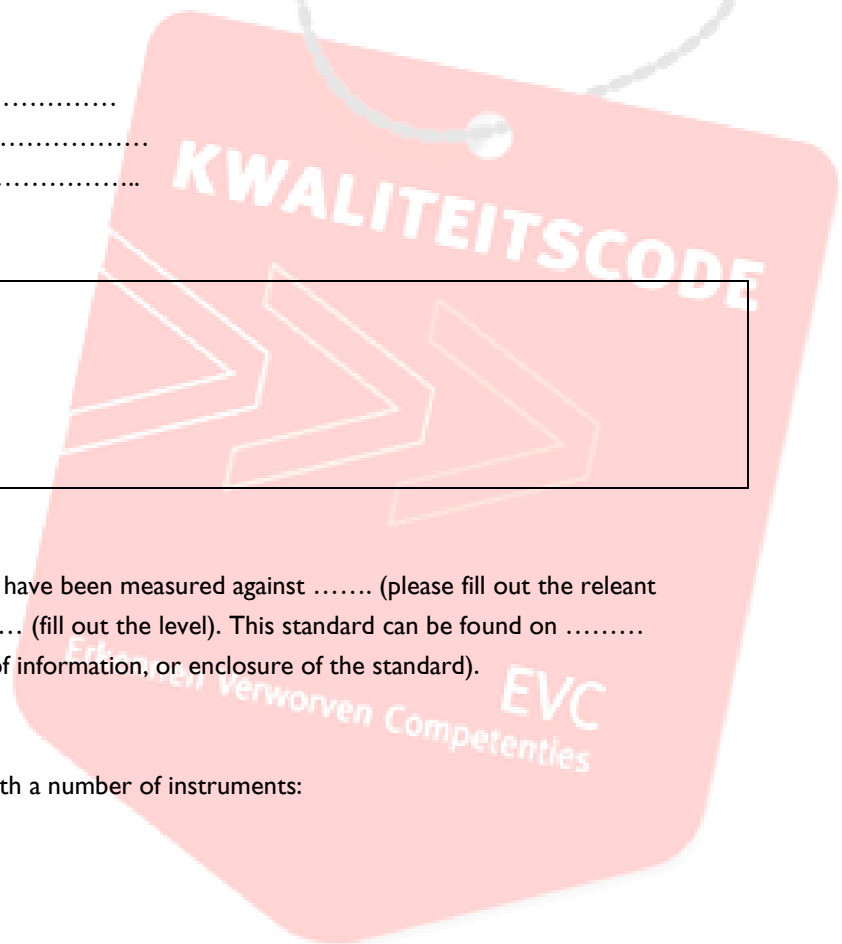
The acquired competences of the candidate have been measured against (please fill out the relevant standard). This standard represents level (fill out the level). This standard can be found on (reference to the website or other source of information, or enclosure of the standard).

The instruments

The assessor has evaluated the candidate with a number of instruments:

-
-
-etc.

During the evaluation, the assessor used the information which was provided by the candidate, namely:



Basis for the assessment of competences

Overview of competences assessed

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- ...etc.

Based on:

Advice

Conclusions

Advice for development

Details APL provider

Name of the organisation

Name legitimizing organisation (if different from the name of the organisation)
.....

Address organisation.....

Place

Signing

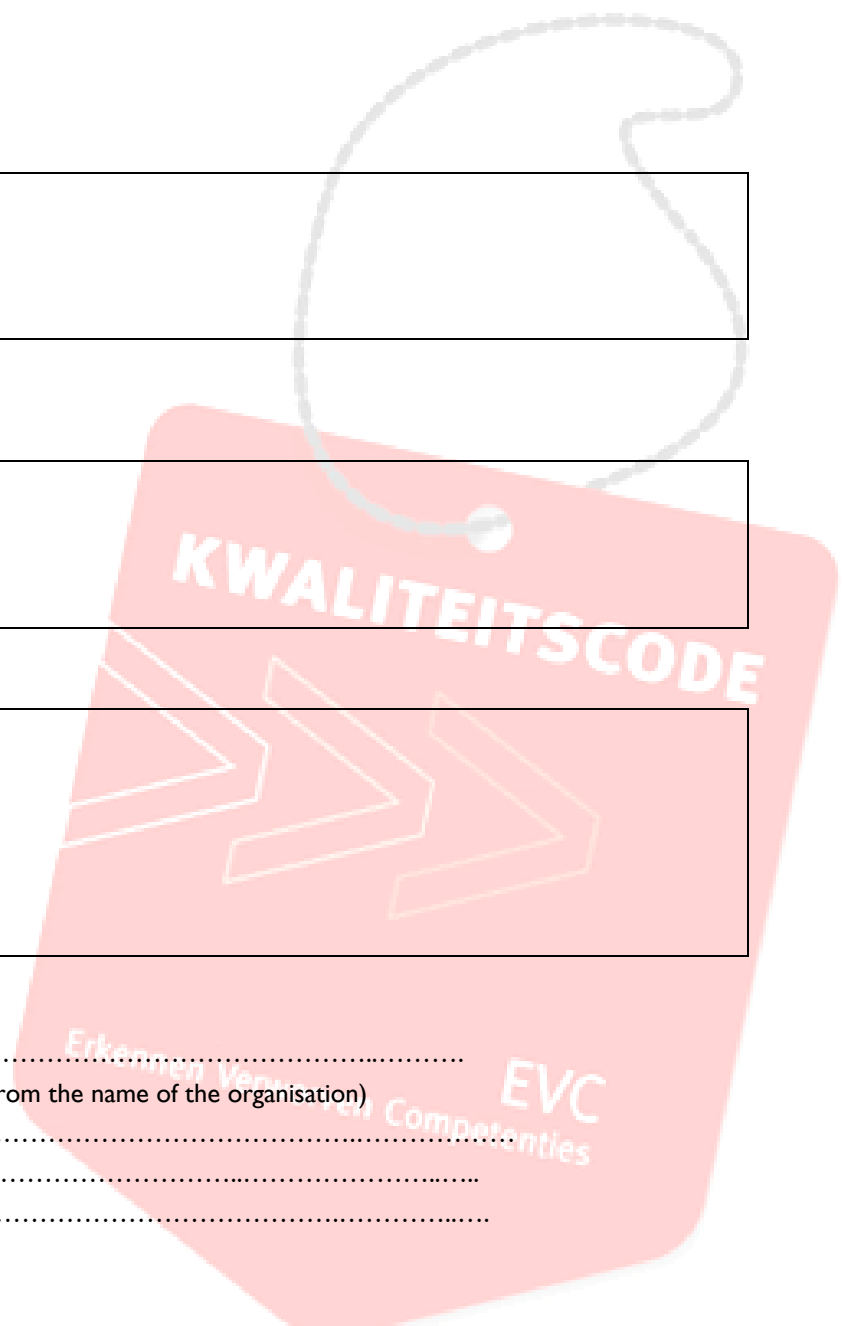
Date:

Signature Assessor.....

Signature Assessor.....(if applicable)

Signature Candidate.....

Signature responsible person for legitimizing



Appendix 2

Checklist APL-procedure: for organisations

Checklist APL procedure for organisations

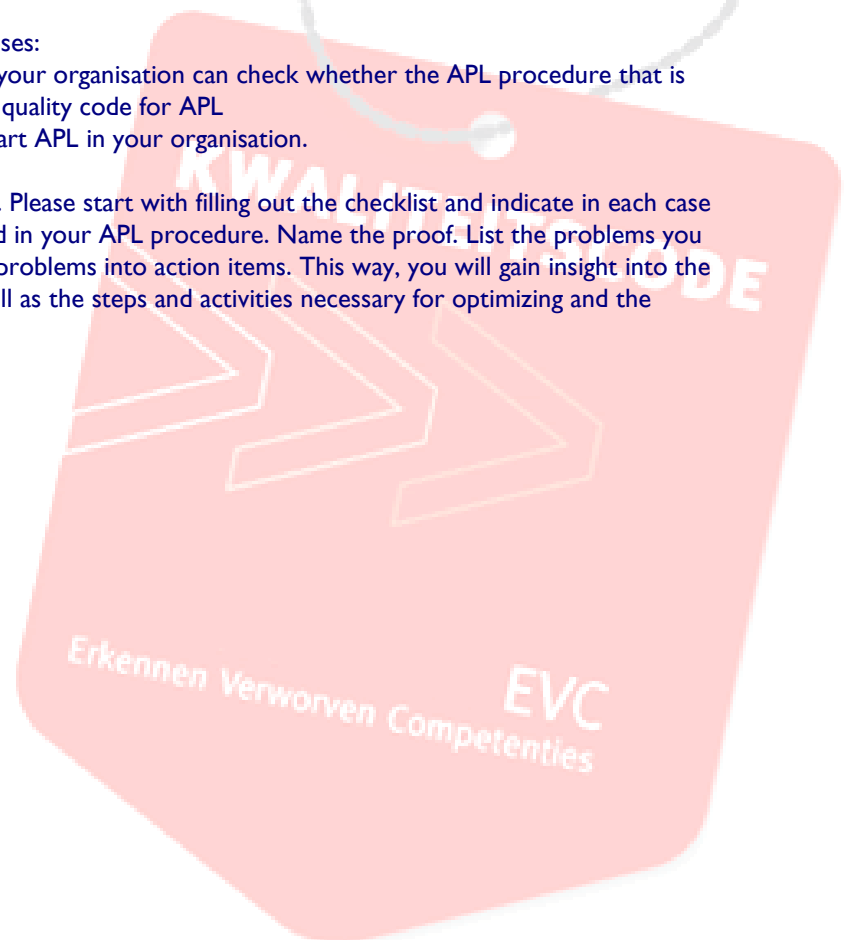
This checklist has been developed in addition to the APL code in the Netherlands. It is one of the instruments from the tool box of the quality model APL. With this checklist, your organisation will be enabled to evaluate the APL procedure against the Dutch Quality Standards for APL. The checklist results in concrete actions for improvement. Actions for improvement can be used to improve the quality of the APL procedures and their instruments in your organisation.

APL is a relatively new method and therefore often unknown. It is important that APL procedures are carried out with high quality; one should be able to rely on the results of an APL procedure.

The checklist can be used for various purposes:

- with the help of the checklist, your organisation can check whether the APL procedure that is used is in compliance with the quality code for APL
- the checklist can be used to start APL in your organisation.

This checklist is a self evaluating instrument. Please start with filling out the checklist and indicate in each case whether the mentioned criteria are included in your APL procedure. Name the proof. List the problems you encounter. Subsequently, you translate the problems into action items. This way, you will gain insight into the current situation of your organisation as well as the steps and activities necessary for optimizing and the introduction of APL.



Checklist APL procedure

I. The objective of APL is to clarify, appraise and recognise present

competences in individuals.

The recognition of acquired competences has a value in and of itself and contributes to employability. In many cases, APL leads to further career-related personal development.

Activities	yes/no	Proof	Problems/ challenges
The objective of APL is being explained to the participants. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - from the perspective of the APL provider? - from career perspective of the participants. 			
The objective of APL is being described for each participant in written quantifiable criteria and is in relation to the candidate's <i>career prospects</i> .			
Agreements for cooperation between the organisations (and people) who execute the APL procedure have been properly established and laid down in writing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a responsible person for the cooperating organisations was appointed - the acts are linked to each other so that the career demands are supported in an optimal way. 			

Norm	yes/no	Proof	Problems/ challenges
Before the start of the procedure, agreements are made with candidates about the objective associated with the APL procedure for the candidate. This is the broader objective in relation to the candidate's career prospects and/or the objectives of the organisation offering APL. The APL provider is <i>responsible</i> for all cooperating parties, so that all activities are coordinated to the candidate's objective. The objective of APL is described for each participant in written quantifiable criteria and is in relation to the candidate's <i>career prospects</i> .			

Action plan for the item Objectives of APL

Actions for improvement	Who	What	When
1			
2			
3			

2.The competences of the participants: APL meets the demands of the individual. Rights and agreements with the APL supplier are clearly written down.

Activities	yes/no	Proof	Problems/ challenges
The application procedure for APL procedures is clear for participants.			
Taking part in an APL procedure is voluntarily.			
Agreements are being made with the participant about the optimum way of completing the APL procedure.			
Information about APL is available for the participants.			
The time schedule and efforts necessary for the APL procedure are realistic and feasible for the participants.			
The privacy of the participant is guaranteed. Agreements about the ownership of the results of the APL reports are drawn up.			
An appeal procedure for participants is available and also applicable to activities that are executed by partners.			

Norm	yes/no	Proof	Problems/ challenges
(Potential) participants are properly and fully informed about the procedure and the results, accessibility is the same for everyone, participants participate voluntarily, privacy is respected and people can lodge complaints, as necessary. Your organisation has an appeal procedure, candidates can make use of.			

Action plan for the item Competences of participants

Actions for improvement	Who	What	When
1			
2			
3			

3 Procedure and instruments are reliable and based on proven standards. Trust is the key concept. Trust has to do with civil effect, well-defined standards, clear information about how assessments are conducted and the arguments on which conclusions are drawn.

Activities	yes/no	Proof	Problems/ challenges
The APL procedure is clear, step by step.			
Every role, task, responsibility and activity is clear.			
In the APL procedure, your organisation uses an official standard (such as the qualification structure of branch standard).			
Is the value of the APL report such that it represents an exemption for a recognized diploma or certificate (with civil effect)?			
Assessments instruments you use are of good quality. Would other assessors come to the same conclusion if they use these instruments?			
Did you purchase instruments or services at professional suppliers?			
Is there an evaluating discussion with the participant about the results and the final outcome?			
The APL reports are drawn up as laid down in the APL code.			

Norm	yes/no	Proof	Problems/challenges
<p>Instruments are specifically designed to clarify competences that are acquired through formal and non-formal learning.</p> <p>Data used in the procedure are sufficiently relevant, current, varied and authentic to serve as proof. Criteria are included in the APL procedure. A set of tools is available where these data still have to be tested.</p> <p>Another assessor with the same materials would have to come to the same conclusion. Each APL procedure results in an APL report that states the participant's competences in relation to the nationally recognised job or professional standard and in relation to the individual career objectives.</p>			

Action plan for the item Procedure and Instruments

Actions for improvement	who	what	when
1			
2			
3			

4. Assessors and supervisors are competent, independent and unbiased.

within the assessment and are embedded in the roles and responsibilities of the assessors avoided. Impartiality can be reinforced through training and through the use of networks.

Independence and impartiality are critical factors involved. Unnecessary mixing of roles must be

Activities	yes/no	proof	Problems/challenges
The independence of your assessors is guaranteed.			
The role of the supervisor and assessor is properly separated?			
Do you use patently competent assessors during the APL procedure?			
Do you use patently competent supervisors during the APL procedure?			
Your supervisors and assessors keep up their competences.			

Norm	yes/no	Proof	Problems/challenges
<p>Expertise of assessors (deciders) and supervisors is demonstrated. They are professional and easily assessed on the required competences. Assessors and supervisors continually verify whether the procedure meets and continues to meet the agreed objectives. They determine the quality of the proof, the assessment of the competency profile and the APL report.</p> <p>The expertise refers to the professional knowledge, assessment knowledge, and the remaining requirements for transparency, relevance, objectivity and validity. The APL provider has organised the procedure so that, in retrospect, it can verify that the assessor and the supervisor also have that expertise ('competences' in the APL code) and that they maintain this expertise.</p>			

Action plan for the item Assessors and Supervisors

Actions for improvement	who	what	when
1			
2			
3			

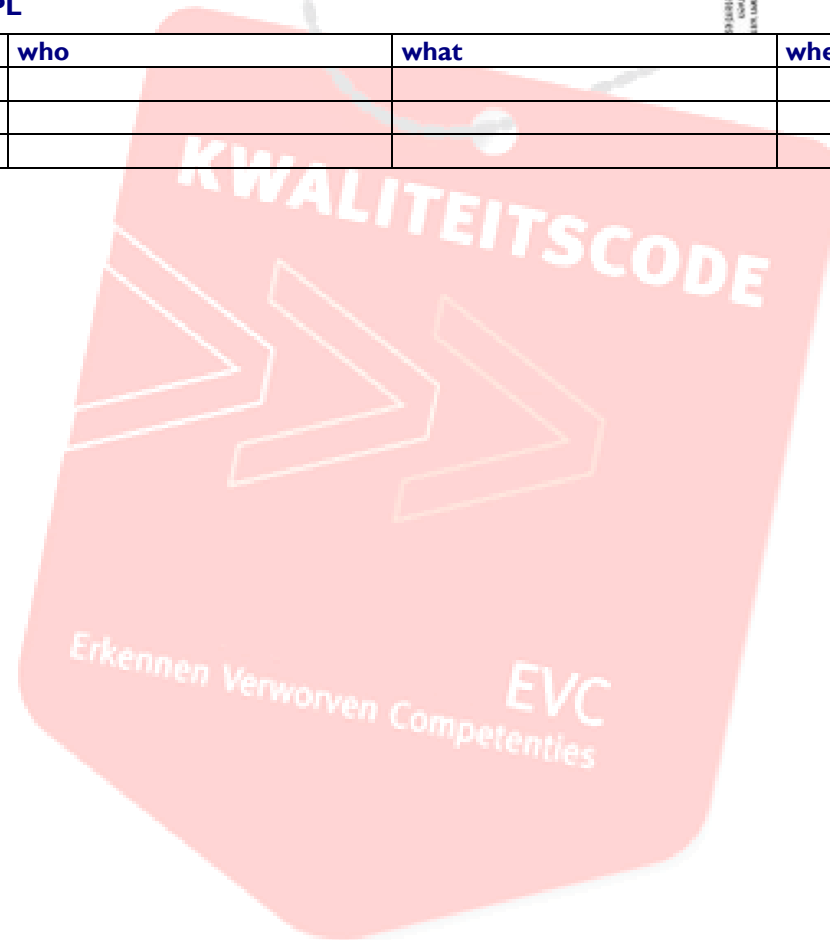
5. The quality of APL procedures is assured and is continually improved: the quality of the APL procedure and the set of instruments used with the procedure are assured. Evaluations are made on a regular basis. The results are incorporated into improvement actions.

Activities	yes/no	Proof	Problems/challenges
The APL procedure is publically available.			
The APL procedure will be evaluated with the organisations and people involved on a regular basis.			
The APL procedure will be evaluated with the participants involved.			
The realisation of the individual career goals is being measured six months after the APL report.			
Measures for improvement are being formulated after evaluations.			
Your organisation takes responsibility for the quality of APL.			
The evaluation of the APL procedure is embedded in the current quality systems of your organisation.			

Norm	yes/no	Proof	Problems/challenges
Evaluations are prepared for maintaining and improving the total quality of the organised APL procedure. The APL procedure is evaluated by the APL provider on a regular basis and is systematically integrated in procedures and routines. APL providers measure whether the prepared objectives for participants that are linked to the APL procedure are actually implemented through evaluations of participants and cooperating parties.			

Action plan for the item Quality of APL

Actions for improvement	who	what	when
1			
2			
3			



Appendix 3 Assessment report APL provider

1. The objective of APL

Before the start of the procedure, agreements are made with candidates about the objective associated with the APL procedure for the candidate. This is the broader objective in relation to the candidate's career prospects and/or the objectives of the organisation. The APL provider is *responsible* for all cooperating parties, so that all activities are coordinated to the candidate's objective. The objective of APL is described for each participant in quantifiable criteria and is in relation to the candidate's *career prospects*.

	Reasoning	Satisfies the APL code	Does not satisfy the APL code
Compared with norm text			

2. The competences of the participants

(Potential) participants are properly and fully informed, accessibility is the same for everyone, participants participate voluntarily, privacy is respected and people can lodge complaints, as necessary. Candidates can make use of an appeal procedure.

	Reasoning	Satisfies the APL code	Does not satisfy the APL code
Compared with norm text			

3. Procedures and instruments

Instruments are specifically designed to clarify competences that are acquired through initial learning methods. Data used in the procedure are sufficiently relevant and authentic to serve as proof. Criteria are included in the APL procedure criteria. A set of tools is available where these data still have to be tested.

Another assessor with the same materials would have to come to the same conclusion. Each APL procedure results in an APL report that in any case states the participant's competences in relation to the standard and in relation to the individual career objectives.

	Reasoning	Satisfies the APL code	Does not satisfy the APL code
Compared with norm text			

4. Expertise of assessors and supervisors

Expertise of assessors (deciders) and supervisors is demonstrated. They are professional and easily assessed on the required competences. Assessors and supervisors continually verify whether the procedure meets and

continues to meet the agreed objectives. They determine the quality of the proof, the assessment of the competency profile and the APL report.

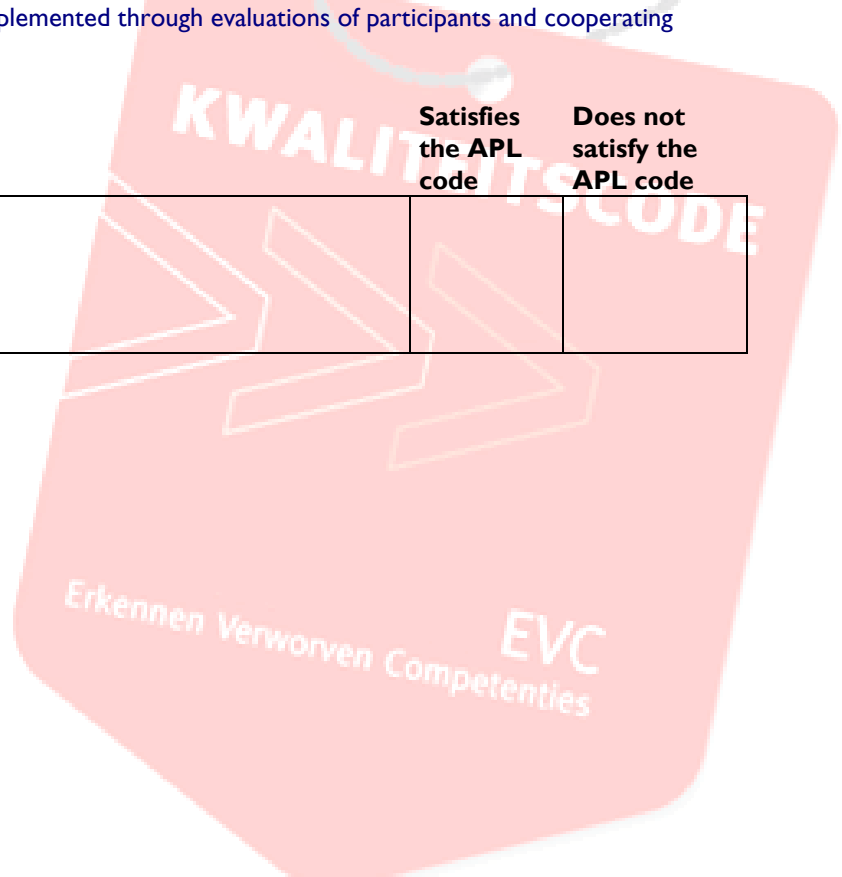
The expertise refers to the professional knowledge, assessment knowledge, and the remaining requirements for transparency, relevance, objectivity and validity. The APL provider has organised the procedure so that, in retrospect, it can verify that the assessor and the supervisor also have that expertise ('competences' in the APL code) and that they maintain this expertise.

	Reasoning	Satisfies the APL code	Does not satisfy the APL code
Compared with norm text			

5. Assurance and improvement of the quality of the procedures

Evaluations are prepared for maintaining and improving the total quality of the organised APL procedure. The APL procedure is evaluated by the APL provider on a regular basis and is systematically integrated in procedures and routines. APL providers measure whether the prepared objectives for participants that are linked to the APL procedure are actually implemented through evaluations of participants and cooperating parties.

	Reasoning	Satisfies the APL code	Does not satisfy the APL code
Compared with norm text			



Proof APL procedure

You can designate the documents that you use as proof in the table below.

	Name of proof	Code, version no., date, etc.
A		
B		
C		
D		
E		
F		
G		
H		
I		
J		
K		
L		



Conclusions:

1. The APL procedure satisfies/does not satisfy* the norm texts.

2. Based on this report, the assessment organisation advises /does not advise / provisional* registration in the register of accredited APL providers.

This declaration is valid until the date of the next verification <date>⁵

Date:

Name of Assessor:

Signature:



* delete what is not applicable

⁵ For provisional registration, the date for the next verification must be within 1 year.