The EU Customs Certificate of Recognition

for Customs-Specific Bachelor's and Master's Programmes

based on the CustComp^{eu}

Recognition Process

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Reference Documents

Ref.	Title	Version	Date
R01	EU Customs CFW for the Customs Administrations, including the Role Mapping Matrix	N/A	30/09/2013
R02	EU Customs Training Curriculum public sector	N/A	06/03/2014
R03	EU Customs Training Curriculum private sector	N/A	2014

Europa link to reference documents: *https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/eu-training/eu-customs-competency-framework_en*

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Main abbreviations and acronyms

Abbreviation	Meaning
AB	Assessment Board
CustComp^{eu}	EU Competency Framework for Customs
EC	European Commission
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EU	European Union
MC	Management Competencies
OC	Operational Competencies
PC	Professional Competencies
PICS	Programmes Information and Collaboration Space
PL	Proficiency Level
RTP	Reference Training Programmes
WCO	World Customs Organization

1. Document Purpose

This document is intended to provide guidance for private and public universities, higher education institutions, business schools and colleges in Europe regarding the EU Certificate of Recognition for Customs-specific academic programmes, herein referred to as the **EU Customs Certificate of Recognition**.

There are two types of study programmes eligible for the EU Customs Certificate of Recognition:

- Bachelor's and Master's degree study programmes offered by universities, higher education institutions, business schools and colleges;
- Customs modules within Bachelor's or Master's degree study programmes.

All study programmes may be delivered using a wide range of delivery methods, such as (but not limited to) classroom training, distance, virtual and e-learning modules, self-study, written assignments, projects, literature study, thesis, guest lectures, etc., as well as full- or part-time studies.

The purpose of this document is twofold:

1. To provide the user with general information and business context of the Customs Bachelor's and Master's degree study programmes for the recognition process:

   - Provide business context to the EU Customs Certificate of Recognition for Customs academic programmes;
   - Highlight the value of the EU Certificate of Recognition for Customs academic programmes.

2. To outline the recognition process for the EU Customs Certificate of Recognition, which includes:

   - A brief overview of the prerequisites and conditions that need to be met in order to initiate and pursue EU recognition of Customs academic programmes;
   - A detailed overview of the recognition process, related timelines and the actions required by all parties involved.

The recognition process (including the related agreements and information covered in this document), has been developed in close cooperation with an EU Project Group made up of experts from national Customs Administrations, Trade and academics from European universities, and further supported by a team of training consultants. To ensure the recognition process runs smoothly, the EU Project Group teamed up with a delegation from Münster University to participate in a pilot project. This collaboration ultimately led to the development of this document.

2. Introduction

2.1 Why introduce the EU Certificate of Recognition for Customs academic programmes?

With a clear focus on the future, the EU launched the EU Customs Certificate of Recognition as another key step towards achieving **innovation and modernisation** of the Customs profession, in addition to actively supporting the need to develop **high-quality Customs expertise**. The aim is to develop and better align study programmes delivered by European universities, higher education institutions, business schools and colleges in a uniform manner. The goal of this exercise is to achieve **consistent Customs Training Programmes throughout Europe** and a **better equipped Customs taskforce** that can address the challenges of tomorrow.

The EU Customs Recognition Process for Bachelor's and Master's degree study programmes (and respective modules) is based on the EU Customs Competency Framework (CustComp^eu^), **a common strategic performance development framework for the Customs profession within the EU**. The aim of this framework is to increase the level of performance for Customs services throughout the EU. However, its ultimate objective is to create a common basis within Europe that will serve as a starting point for the development of EU coordinated Customs Training Programmes.

The framework consists of a variety of capacity-building tools designed specifically for the Customs profession. The framework lists and describes, among others, **19 management, 21 operational (technical) and 25 professional competency areas designated as pivotal to the Customs profession**. Common EU Customs role descriptions (each followed by a competency profile unique to the role) describe in detail the responsibilities, behaviours and optimal blend of competencies Customs professionals are expected to learn in order to be considered successful in their roles. Complementing the CustComp^eu^ toolbox is the **EU Customs Training Curriculum** (public and private sector). It provides a comprehensive analysis of the suggested learning topics and outcomes (linked to the designated competency areas) to be achieved by Customs-specific training initiatives. As such, it supports improved and more consistent Customs operations, and organisational performance across Europe.

Today, the CustComp^eu^ is used as a common basis to develop **high-quality and consistent training programmes** for Customs professionals. To further facilitate this alignment, the EU has taken the initiative to devise the **Public and Private sector RTP** (**EU RTP) for Academic Customs Education** (Annex 6) and proceed with a 2019 revision of the document (Annex 7) based on the 2018-19 pilot Recognition cycle findings. These Public and Private sector RTP for Academic Customs Education comprise **an indicative list of competencies** important to the Customs profession and aim to provide a point of reference for the creation of academic Customs study programmes or modules. Throughout these documents, the Public and Private sector RTP for Academic Customs Education will serve as an example and a suggested way of organising academic training content which, coupled with the EU Training Curriculum (Public and Private sector), can provide significant insight into the EU standards of recognition. However, these documents should **by no means be considered as prescriptive** for the training competencies a Bachelor's or Master's degree programme must cover.

The process in obtaining the EU Certificate of Recognition has been developed partly in coordination with the WCO. Considering that the CustComp^eu^ is also aligned with the **WCO's PICARD Professional Standards**, the academic study programmes successfully obtaining the EU Certificate of Recognition will have privileged access to the recognition of the WCO.

> The EU Certificate of Recognition is not mandatory for the establishment of a Customs-specific academic programme. It does, however, serve as a **quality mark** that will benefit both the academic study provider and the study participant (and subsequently the Customs profession within a Customs Administration or Trade organisation). Through this quality mark, the EU ensures that recognised academic programmes deliver consistent, relevant and high-quality learning outcomes.

The EU Certificate of Recognition will not replace academic accreditation. However, it will provide the academic programme(s) obtaining the EU recognition with a European Customs quality mark. Please visit the official EU Europa Recognition page for more information: *https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/eu-training/eu-customs-competency-framework/eu-recognition-state-art-customs-academic-programmes_en*

3. Value proposition – Why apply for the EU Certificate of Recognition?

3.1 Value at three levels

Customs study programmes with an EU Customs Certificate of Recognition will bring value to each of the following three levels:

1. **Academic study providers** (also referred to as "the applicant") that receive the EU Customs Certificate of Recognition will benefit in the following ways:

   - The academic programme will be officially recognised by the EC, and applicants may use this recognition to increase awareness and interest in their study programmes. To do so, they will be permitted to:
     - identify the programme using the official EU identification statement and certificate (as per Section 3.2);
     - join the list of officially EU recognised Customs academic programmes.

   - The study programme is likely to have a larger appeal to candidate participants for the following two reasons:
     - Students will benefit from the recognition through guaranteed quality and relevance of the content;
     - Successful students will have built knowledge and skills in line with those identified within the CustComp^{eu} for the Customs profession. As such, their employers can easily map these competencies to their professional roles and record their competencies in their competency profile.

2. **Organisations interacting with Customs** (Customs Administrations or Trade organisations) will hire professionals that receive high-quality training, which in turn will lead to improved business outcomes and more consistent organisational performance. Additionally, for newly hired employees, this means that those who have already followed an EU recognised academic programme will require relatively less training investment before they can operate independently.

3. **Academic study participants** are assured that the study programme is high-quality, up-to-date and relevant. Successful participants will have developed competencies relevant to their current or future professional roles. The employer will then transpose these competencies into the employee's competency profile.

3.2 Identification statement and European Commission logo

The EU recognised Customs academic programmes will be permitted to use the official EC identification statement, for communication purposes:

"The European Commission recognises the [*insert Bachelor or Master's name*] academic programme *or module*, delivered by the [*insert name organisation*] as a high-quality Customs-specific programme or module that is in line with the CustComp^{eu} for the Customs profession and its associated EU Reference Training Programmes for Academic Customs Education."

4. Parties involved in the recognition process

Three main parties are involved in the recognition process. They are listed below:

- **The applicant**

  The applicant is the academic study provider/developer (a university, higher education institution, business school or college seeking recognition of an academic programme registered in the EU that provides or has developed a Customs-specific Bachelor's or Master's degree study programme (or modules within such a programme) that is also **accredited**[1]. The study programmes can be for both part- and full-time students.

- **The EC**

  The EC oversees, manages and supports the entire process. The process is initiated by the applicant. The EC may award or deny recognition based on the recommendations of the EU AB.

- **The EU AB**

  The EU AB is a group of nominated representatives and experts. It will review the materials provided by the applicant in order to inform the EC about whether the prospective study programme sufficiently covers the required learning topics and learning outcomes, in line with the CustComp[eu] for the Customs profession and the revised Public and Private sector RTP for Academic Customs Education (Annex 7).

Note: The EU Certificate of Recognition initiative is supported by the EU Cooperation Programme "Customs 2020" and its successor programmes, covering all relevant costs.

4.1 Composition of the EU AB

To ensure high-quality reviews and award recommendations, the EU AB will be composed of members with a variety of profiles, and whose expertise includes at least one of the following domains:

- **Experts in the field of training and development**
  These profiles will have extensive experience in the development of different types of study programmes. The following experience will be represented in the group:
  - Full-time *vs* part-time programmes
  - Programmes with an operational *vs* strategic focus
  - Short-term *vs* long-term programmes
  - Bachelor's or Master's degree study programme specification
  - Public *vs* private academic programmes

  Suggested percentage of the group: **approximately 40%**

- **Experts in Customs subject matter**
  The above profiles have expert insight in Customs operations, as well as knowledge and skills required to undertake these operations. As such, they are well-positioned to assess whether a programme seeking recognition builds on the knowledge and skills (even if the scope of the academic programme covers Customs topics that are not part of the CustComp[eu]).

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2. The procedure for obtaining accreditation should at least have been initiated.

The group of experts in Customs-related matters within the EU AB will include a relevant number of profiles from both the public and private sector.

Suggested percentage of the group: **approximately 60%**

The ideal size of the EU AB is between 8 and 14 people (to allow for maximum flexibility in the organisation of board meetings and for parallel assessment of academic programmes, if required). EU AB members will be nominated for a period of three years.

This EU AB will additionally be supported by:

- Representatives from the EC;
- External support to focus on the practical matters related to the process and ensure deadlines are met.

4.2 Responsibilities and mandate of the EU AB

The responsibilities of the EU AB include the following:

- Respond to applications for recognition, in line with timelines stated in *section 5.4. Timelines;*
- Perform high-quality, consistent and unbiased review and assessment of all documentation required to support an application for recognition;
- Provide the EC with a recognition recommendation for the academic programme, supported by a declaration summarising its arguments.

The EU AB is mandated to:

- perform the **qualitative analysis** of the programme information submitted in the application Forms, provide the EC with a **recommendation** to approve, conditionally approve or reject the application (for more information see *5.3.2.Phase 2 – Assessment phase*);

- perform the **qualitative analysis** of the conditions of the verification phase, provide the EC with a **recommendation** to approve or reject the application based on the results of this analysis (for more information see *5.3.3 Phase 3 – Verification phase*);

- request further information;
- suggest the suspension of the recognition process, if and when it deems this necessary.

4.3 Organisation of the EU AB

This section explains how the EU AB organises and votes.

4.3.1 Organisation of the work

- All activities related to the EU Customs Recognition Certification process will be conducted within the timelines, as foreseen in *5.4 Timelines;*
- Each member prepares for the assessment meeting individually by reviewing the application forms provided by the applicant and by submitting their individual recommendation for the programme;
- Each member shares his or her individual recommendation and supporting arguments with the entire board before the assessment meeting;
- All preparatory activities for the assessment meeting and communications will be managed using the EC's online PICS platform and via email;

- An on-site visit to the academic study provider premises may be organised for full Bachelor's and Master's degree studies programmes. At least two members of the AB will be required to attend;
- The EU AB meets for the assessment meeting (this can also be an online meeting). During this assessment meeting, the voting system (as explained in 4.3.2) will be applied.

4.3.2 Voting system

Depending on the context and the number of applications to be considered, the EU AB may decide that the application will be reviewed by a relevant subset of EU AB members (minimum five members).

Based on their assessment, the members will draft an **individual recommendation**. This recommendation may be one of the following:

a. Fully approve the application;

b. Conditionally approve the application, supported by:
   o a list of relevant and legitimate arguments;
   o a corresponding list of required actions.

c. Reject the application, supported by:
   o a list of relevant and legitimate arguments.

The votes are counted during the meeting. All arguments are presented and discussed. After this discussion, there will be a final **plenary vote** during which the EU AB should **reach a consensus** resulting in one of three possible outcomes:

a. Fully approve the application;

b. Conditionally approve of the application, supported by:
   o a list of relevant and legitimate arguments;
   o a corresponding list of required actions.

c. Reject the application, supported by:
   o a list of relevant and legitimate arguments.

This plenary vote results in a **final group recommendation** by the EU AB. Ideally, the final group recommendation is reached by unanimous vote. If this is not the case, a discussion will be initiated to reach consensus. If no consensus can be reached, the final group recommendation will be based on a simple majority vote. This final group recommendation serves as the main input for the EC to decide on whether to grant recognition. In case of a unanimous vote, the EC will follow the recommendation of the EU AB. If the vote is not unanimous, the EC will decide based on the arguments presented during the meeting.

5. Process for Customs academic programmes to obtain EU Certificate of Recognition

There is a common process for requesting the EU Certificate of Recognition for a Customs academic programme (Bachelor's and Master's degree studies or modules within), for both the private and public sector.

The following sections will aim to:

- explain the eligibility criteria;
- explain the language conditions;
- provide detailed information on the recognition process;
- explain the timelines related to the annual recognition process;
- provide more information about the requirements during each of the recognition process phases;
- provide information concerning the duration and renewal of the EU Certificate of Recognition.

5.1 The EU Certificate of Recognition request process

The recognition process consists of two consecutive phases and a third non-mandatory phase. The EC, in consultation with the EU AB, will decide if the third optional phase is required.
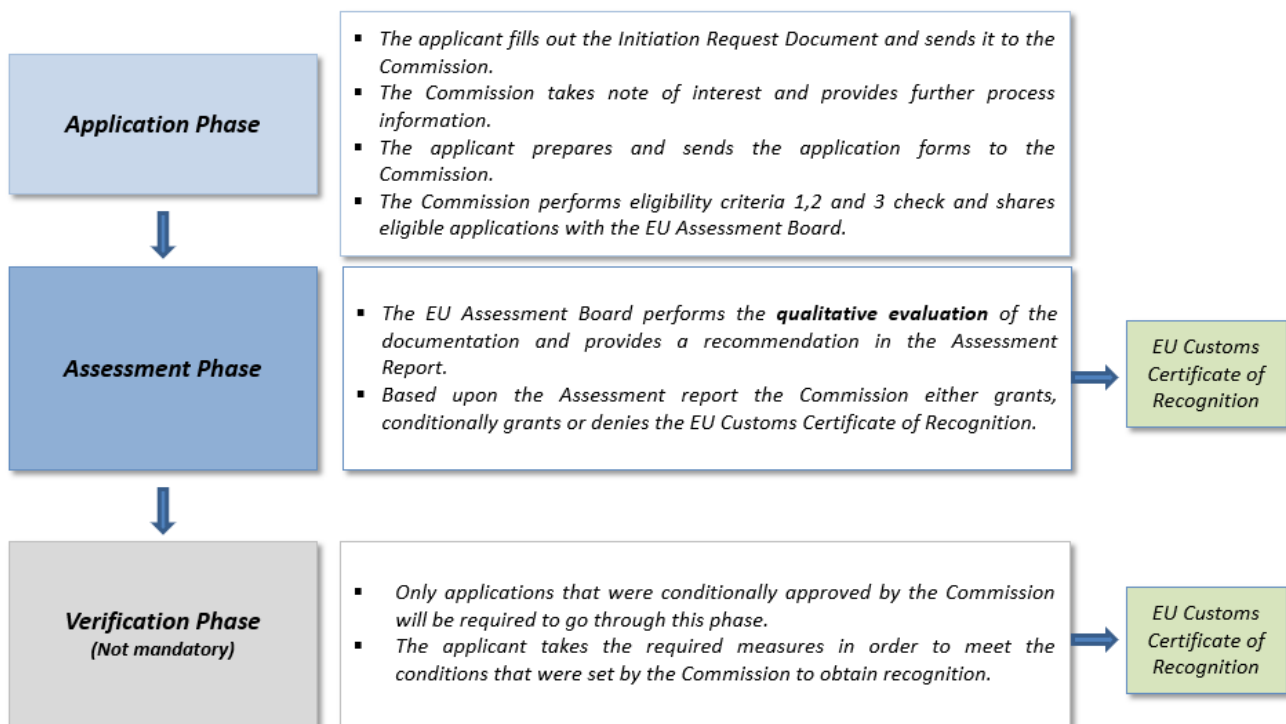

Application Phase
- The applicant fills out the Initiation Request Document and sends it to the Commission.
- The Commission takes note of interest and provides further process information.
- The applicant prepares and sends the application forms to the Commission.
- The Commission performs eligibility criteria 1,2 and 3 check and shares eligible applications with the EU Assessment Board.

Assessment Phase
- The EU Assessment Board performs the **qualitative evaluation** of the documentation and provides a recommendation in the Assessment Report.
- Based upon the Assessment report the Commission either grants, conditionally grants or denies the EU Customs Certificate of Recognition.

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Verification Phase
(Not mandatory)
- Only applications that were conditionally approved by the Commission will be required to go through this phase.
- The applicant takes the required measures in order to meet the conditions that were set by the Commission to obtain recognition.

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Figure 1 - Phases of the Recognition Process

A detailed schematic overview of the recognition process can be found in *Annex 5 – Schematic Overview of the recognition process*.

5.1.1 Phase 1 – Application phase

Step 1.1 - The applicant submits the **Initiation Request Document** (Annex 1) along with the equivalent **Content/Modules Overview** of the applying programme to the EC via the dedicated email below. This document should be in English. It should provide the EC with information about the programme seeking recognition. Submission of the Initiation Request Document enables the EC to allocate the necessary time and resources to manage and process the application. It is the applicant's responsibility to verify whether the programme meets all eligibility criteria. In case of doubt, the applicant should communicate with the dedicated contact person at the EC via the email EU-CertificateOfRecognition@ec.europa.eu to clarify before submitting any further documentation.

Step 1.2. - The applicant prepares the **application forms** (Annex 2, Annex 3 and Annex 4) and sends them to the EC (mail to: EU-CertificateOfRecognition@ec.europa.eu). All documents should be in English.

Step 1.3. - Along with the application forms, the **accreditation document** for the academic programme for which the EU Customs Certificate of Recognition is being sought should be submitted. National or international accreditation for Master's or Bachelor's academic programmes (or modules thereof) is typically provided by governmental or officially authorised accreditation bodies. A translated **English version** of the accreditation is also required. The expiration date and the renewal policy should also be mentioned in the **Initiation Request Document**.

The EC performs the eligibility check for Criteria 1, 2 and 3 (as presented in 5.2 of the present) and ensures that all eligible applications are forwarded to the EU AB members via the dedicated PICS platform. As a general rule, the applicant should be aware that a minimum period of 1-2 weeks is required to process the application forms. The duration may vary depending on the nature of the programme.

During the application phase, all applicants can contact the EC via the dedicated email: EU-CertificateOfRecognition@ec.europa.eu to receive troubleshooting information.

5.1.2   Phase 2 – Assessment phase

Step 2.1 - The EU AB members perform individual qualitative evaluations of the submitted programme information and make recommendations based on them.

Step 2.2 - For recognition of Customs Bachelor's and Master's degree study programmes, a visit to the applicant's site may be planned. During this visit, the EU AB members may ask for further clarifications. The applicant also has the opportunity to comprehensively describe the value that the programme brings.

Step 2.3 - The EU AB members gather for the assessment meeting (or online meeting) to present their individual recommendations and supporting arguments. In some cases, the EU AB may decide to invite the applicant to participate in part of the meeting.

During the assessment meeting, the EU AB will assess the application, reach a consensus and provide one of three possible recommendations:

a. Fully approve the application;

b. Conditionally approve the application, supported by:
    - a list of relevant and legitimate arguments;
    - a corresponding list of required actions.

c. Reject the application, supported by:
    - a list of relevant and legitimate arguments.

Based on the above recommendations, the EC will make the final decision to grant or reject the application for the EU Customs Certificate of Recognition.

If the application is rejected, the applicant can apply again during the next cycle in the following year.

All applicants will receive official, substantiated communication on the outcomes of the assessment phase, once final.

More information on the eligibility criteria and the requirements can be found in *5.2 Eligibility criteria* and *5.4.2 Phase 2 – Assessment requirements.*

More information on how the EU AB is organised can be found in *4.2 Responsibilities and mandate of the EU AB.*

5.1.3   Phase 3 – Verification phase

The verification phase is not mandatory. The decision about whether it is initiated depends on the outcome of the assessment meeting and the corresponding decision by the EC. The objective of this phase is to verify that the list of required actions stated by the EU AB as the conditions for approval have been performed by the applicant.

Step 3.1 – The EU AB will verify its conclusions:

a. Approves the training programme in full and shares this recommendation with the EC;
b. Rejects the training programme in full and shares this recommendation, as well as the supporting arguments for rejection, with the EC[2].

Step 3.2 – The EC will take note of the EU AB's final recommendation and make a final decision to either grant or deny recognition of the academic programme.

All applicants involved in the verification phase will receive official, substantiated communication on the conditions and timeline they need to comply with in order to receive the EU Customs Certificate of Recognition. In case the EC rejects the request for recognition of the academic programme, the applicant can re-apply for recognition during the next recognition process cycle.

5.2.   Eligibility criteria

For a Customs-specific academic programme to be eligible for EU recognition, a minimum of three key criteria must first be met:

Criterion 1 - The study programme should be accredited, based on the Bologna principles or equivalent.

Academic programmes are required to be accredited. National or international accreditation for Master's or Bachelor's academic programmes (or modules thereof) is typically provided by governmental or officially authorised accreditation bodies. Accreditation implies that the study programme is aligned with the Bologna Process[3] (or equivalent). The accreditation body is invited to use the EU content (CustComp[eu] [R01] and Public and Private sector RTP for Academic Customs Education – Annex 7) for their assessment, although this is not a mandatory requirement. This documentation can be made available upon request. If the

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[2] *The programme can be rejected in full if the EU AB decides that not all conditions listed in the conditional approval recommendation during the assessment phase have been met.*

[3] *The Bologna Process is a collective effort of public authorities, universities, teachers and students, together with stakeholder associations, employers, quality assurance agencies, international organisations and institutions, including the EC. The main focus of the Bologna Process is (a) the introduction of the three-cycle system (bachelor/master/doctorate); (b) strengthened quality assurance and (c) easier recognition of qualifications and periods of study. For more information on the Bologna Process please visit:* http://www.ehea.info/

applicant is seeking EU recognition for a Customs module rather than a fully Customs-specific academic programme, the full programme of the Customs module should be accredited.

Eligibility check Criterion 1
Criterion 1 eligibility is checked in **Initiation Request Document Form 1** (Annex 1), where the applicant is requested to provide detailed information about the accreditation of the submitted academic programme. Applications for academic programmes that have already submitted a petition to receive accreditation but have not officially received it during the time of applying for recognition, will either be discontinued or may conditionally go through the verification phase. In all cases, applicants may be requested to submit further supportive documentation.

Master's , Bachelor's or modules within	
4 quantitative assessment parameters:	1. Accreditation documentation submitted 2. Expiration date provided 3. Renewal policy provided 4. English version submitted

Table 1 - Eligibility check criterion 1

Criterion 2 - The academic programme must be <u>Customs-specific</u>

A Customs-specific academic programme is a study programme with a significant focus on Customs-specific topics. This does not necessarily mean that the programme must be composed exclusively of Customs content as captured in the CustComp[eu] [R01] and the associated Public and Private sector RTP for Academic Customs Education (Annexes 6 and 7). Examples of Customs-specific content are topics directly related to the Customs profession (e.g. origin, valuation, etc.), as well as more general topics that may touch upon the Customs profession, such as International Trade, Supply Chain Management, etc.

a. To become eligible for EU recognition, an **<u>overall programme</u>** must consist of **minimum 75% of Customs-specific content**. In this case, the EU AB will consider the programme to be a **full Customs programme**. The EU AB may require that the term "Customs" is mentioned in the title of the study programme.

b. To become eligible for EU recognition, a **<u>Customs module</u>** in a Master's or Bachelor's programme must be **100% Customs-specific** and must represent **between 30% and 74% of the overall programme**. In this case, the part of the programme that covers Customs-specific content will be considered as a **Customs module within a wider programme**. This Customs module could be a minor or a major. The percentages mentioned above will be calculated based on the portion of ECTS points[4], or an equivalent points system, devoted to Customs-specific topics in the entire Bachelor or Master's degree studies programme.

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[4] *ECTS stands for European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). ECTS is a tool that helps to understand the weight of the programme (and its individual subjects) in terms of hours of study. The use of ECTS, in conjunction with outcomes-based qualifications frameworks such as the CustComp[eu] and its associated RTP for Academic Customs Education, makes study programmes and qualifications more transparent and facilitates the recognition of programmes. For more information on ECTS points please visit: http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/ECTS_Guide/00/0/ects-users-guide-2015_614000.pdf*

Eligibility check Criterion 2
Criterion 2 eligibility is checked in **Academic Programme Outline Form 2** (Annex 2), where the applicant is requested to describe all courses/modules included in the academic programme along with the ECTS points (or equivalent) each module grants. A calculation of the Customs-specific ECTS points (or equivalent) against the overall ECTS points the academic programme grants, result in a total Customs ECTS percentage that will be compared to the minimum requirements as presented below.

Master's or Bachelor's	
An overall programme must comprise a minimum 75 % of Customs-specific content.	Out of the total number of the academic programme's ECTS points, 75% should be granted to Customs-specific modules. *e.g. The academic programme consists of 20 modules and grants 60 ECTS points in total. To be eligible, it is required that 45 ECTS points (75%) out of 60 be granted to Customs-specific modules.*

Modules within Master's or Bachelor's	
a) To become eligible for EU recognition, (a) Customs module(s) in a Master's or Bachelor's programme must be 100 % Customs-specific.	e.*g. The academic provider submits 6 Customs-specific modules for recognition out of a total of 20 in the programme. All 6 modules should be 100% Customs-specific.*
b) To become eligible for EU recognition, (a) Customs module(s) must represent 30% to 74% of the overall programme.	e.g. *The academic programme consists of 20 modules and grants 60 ECTS points in total. To be eligible, it is required that the 6 Customs-specific modules grant at least 18 ECTS points (30 %) out of the 60 ECTS points that the 20 modules grant in total.*

Table 2 - Eligibility check criterion 2

Criterion 3 – The academic programme must be substantially <u>in line with the Public and Private sector RTP for Academic Customs Education - Annex 6 and 7</u> (and thereby with the CustComp^{eu} and the associated EU Customs Training Curricula for the Public and Private sector).[5]

For **Master's and Bachelor's degree study programmes** and **Customs-specific modules within,** the Public and Private sector RTP for Academic Customs Education outline the indicative list of competencies important to the Customs profession for the public and the private sector, respectively.

There are three CustComp^{eu} competency areas incorporated within the revised Public and Private sector RTP for Academic Customs Education:

- Operational Competencies (OC) that cover the demonstrable technical characteristics that enable successful performance in Customs roles.

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[5] *The applicant is advised to refer to both* CustComp^{eu} *Training Curricula (Public and Private) [R02, R03] to obtain the full set of competencies addressed by the academic programme.*

- Professional Competencies (PC) that are of use in a broad professional context and describe the motivation, abilities and traits required to perform effectively in a wide range of jobs/roles within the organisation.

- Management Competencies (MC) that are intended to be of specific use for roles with a management function.

The revised Public and Private sector RTP for Academic Customs Education serve as a general guideline as to which CustComp^{eu} competencies the academic programme must cover. The full list of competencies and PL per academic programme/module indicated by the revised Public and Private sector RTP for Academic Customs Education can be found in:

- *Annex 3A – Competencies addressed by the Master's programme (Form 3A)*

- *Annex 3B – Competencies addressed by the Bachelor programme (Form 3B)*

- *Annex 3C – Competencies addressed by a module within a Master's programme (Form 3C)*

- *Annex 3D – Competencies addressed by a module within a Bachelor's programme (Form 3D)*

Deviations from or additions to the list of competencies included in the revised Public and Private RTP for Academic Customs Education are encouraged to ensure an optimal national fit. However, such deviations should be justified on the Deviations – Motivations Form 4 (Annex 4).

As a rule: A minimum of 75% of the competencies of the Public and Private sector RTP for Academic Customs Education must be addressed. This means that for a programme to meet the quantitative assessment of Criterion 3, it needs to fulfil one of the following:

- **Master's programme: 32** out of a total of **42** RTP competencies

- **Bachelor's programme: 23** out of a total of **30** RTP competencies

- **Module(s) within a Master's or Bachelor's programme: 16** out of a total of **21** RTP competencies

with an additional clustering of **a minimum number** of OC, and/or PC and/or MC respectively, as presented in the table below:

Eligibility check Criterion 3
Criterion 3 eligibility is evaluated in **Competencies addressed by the academic programme Form 3** (Annexes 3A-D), where the applicant is requested to provide information on the specific courses and study methods used to train the listed competencies, as well as the equivalent PLs delivered. Evaluation of this criterion happens on two levels: **Quantitative check**: a calculation of the percentage of RTP competencies covered by the academic programme.   **Qualitative evaluation**: a thorough assessment from the AB members.

Master's programme *In line with the Public and Private sector RTP (at least 75%)*	Master's academic programmes need to demonstrate they address a minimum of **32** (75%) RTP competencies (out of a total of 42) at the suggested PL indication, in the following clustering: 18 OC (out of 21) 9 MC (out of 11) 5 PC (out of 10)
Bachelor's programme *In line with the Public and Private sector RTP (at least 75%)*	Bachelor's academic programmes need to demonstrate they address a minimum of **23** (75%) RTP competencies (out of a total of 30) at the suggested PL indication, in the following clustering: 18 OCs (out of 21) 5 PCs (out of 9)
Module(s) within a Master's and Bachelor's programmes *In line with the Public and Private sector RTP (at least 75%)*	Modules within Master's or Bachelor's academic programmes need to demonstrate they address a minimum of **16 OC** (75%) RTP competencies (out of a total of 21) at the suggested PL indication, **3 of which** *must be trained up to PL2 (besides those already in PL2).*

Table 3 - Eligibility check Criterion 3

5.3. Language conditions

The use of a common European language as a delivery language (i.e. English as the language to deliver academic programme) is **not** a requirement for EU recognition. However, the intention to include a subject covering the Customs-specific English vocabulary (ESP – English for Specific Purposes) will be regarded as a positive attribute by the EU AB.[6]

Nevertheless, all communications related to the EU Customs Recognition process (including the documentation requested during the application) will be conducted in English.

5.4. Timelines

The timelines for the process of obtaining EU recognition for a Customs-specific academic programme (Bachelor's, Master's degree studies or modules within) follow an annual cycle. Each year, academic studies providers/developers may initiate an application for EU recognition of its Customs-specific academic programme(s).

5.4.1 Phase 1 – Application phase

There is no fixed period or formal date to submit the Initiation Request Document. This means that the applicant can apply for recognition at any point during the cycle.

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[6] *In general, the use of the English language (or any other relevant language) for the delivery of the study programme ensures the broadest possible access for students from other European regions, thereby maximising the potential target audience. Additionally, this use of a common EU language reflects the current Customs business reality.*

Cut-off date for all submissions

All applications need to be received by the EC **at the latest on 31 December of each year** to be eligible for the assessment process of the following year. Submissions received after 31 December will not be considered for the following year's recognition cycle.

It is recommended that the applicant **foresees sufficient time to develop all required documentation**. As a general guideline, the applicant should consider that on average a minimum period of 2-3 weeks is required to prepare the application forms. This duration may vary depending on the nature of the programme. Therefore, it is strongly recommended to provide the Initiation Request Document to the EC before 1 December, at the latest.

During the application phase, all applicants can contact the EC in order to receive troubleshooting information via the dedicated email: EU-CertificateOfRecognition@ec.europa.eu

5.4.2   Phase 2 – Assessment phase

Recognition decisions

For all application forms submissions that are sent before 31 December of the previous year, the EC will communicate final decisions (based on an Assessment Report drawn up by the EU AB) to the applicant **by 31 May of the assessment year**.

5.4.3   Phase 3 – Verification phase

All verification-related activities are performed between 1 June and 31 July

In case the EU AB deems it necessary that a specific application and accompanying forms need to be verified, this decision will be communicated by 31 May. All activities related to the verification phase will be performed during 1 June-31July). Based on the results of the verification, the EU AB will update its Assessment Report.

Final recognition decisions after verification will be communicated by end of September

Following completion of the verification phase, the EC will communicate final decisions to the applicant by end of September.

5.5. Requirements at each phase of the recognition process

5.5.1   Phase 1 – Application requirements

During the application phase, the applicant needs to fill out all application forms (1-4) listed below. All Forms should be **completed in English**.

A. Initiation Request document Form 1 (Annex 1)

This document provides the EC with important information on the applying academic programme. It includes a detailed description of the content/modules, the ECTS points (or equivalent) the programme grants, the target audience, the duration and delivery methods of the programme. In Initiation Request Form 1, the **accreditation document** is required, along with the expiration date and the renewal policy. National or international accreditation for Master's or Bachelor's academic programmes (or modules thereof), is typically provided by governmental or officially authorised accreditation bodies. A translated English version of the accreditation is also required. As such, it provides the accreditation parameters for Criterion 1.

The eligibility check table for criterion 1 is integrated into Form 1.

B. Training programme outline Form 2 (Annex 2)

This document includes the titles <u>of all individual courses/modules</u> (both Customs-specific and other) taught in the Bachelor's or Master's degree studies programme. Even in the case of applying for EU recognition for specific modules, a detailed description of the courses/modules, the associated study load (training hours and student workload hours), delivery method and evaluation method for all courses should be reported. Additionally, it provides the "customs specificity" Criterion 2 quantitative evaluation result.

The eligibility check table for criterion 2 is integrated into Form 2.

C. Competencies addressed by the programme Form 3 (Annexes 3, A-D)

In this document, the applicant compares the competencies addressed by the academic programme with those addressed by the revised Public and Private sector RTP for Academic Customs Education.

A full list of the suggested competencies and **PL minimum requirements** is included in the Form.

For each competency that is addressed in the Public and Private sector RTP for Academic Customs Education, the following should be indicated by the applicant:

a) The number of hours the competency is taught during the full programme that is seeking recognition;
b) The extent to which the competency is trained by assigning the relevant outcome PL;
c) The individual subject(s) covered.

Please note that: PC and MC, e.g. Teamwork, do not require training through dedicated courses. They can be trained via a group working paper, thesis of transfer project.

To provide insight into and further reference for the training topics and outcomes of each competency, a link to the CustComp^{eu} Training Curriculum Public Sector, CustComp^{eu} Training Curriculum Private Sector (only for OCs) and relevant PL definitions is included in Form 3 (A-D). Criterion 3 "in line with RTP" is assessed in Form 3.

The eligibility check table for criterion 3 is integrated into Form 3.

D. Deviations and motivation Form 4 (Annex 4)

In this Form, any deviations from the minimum requirements to the Public and Private sector RTP for Academic Customs Education (e.g. competencies not addressed, different PL) by the academic programme are encouraged to be listed and justified to ensure an optimal national fit.

5.5.2 Phase 2 – Assessment requirements

During the assessment phase, the EU AB will review the application forms submitted and provide a recommendation to the EC. Based on this recommendation, the EC will either grant, conditionally reassess or deny the EU Customs Certificate of Recognition. The training provider will be prepared to host a visit of the EU AB members at their site, if so requested. Additionally, the EU AB may decide to invite the applicant to their meeting.

Please note that the assessment phase will only be initiated if the process to obtain national accreditation for the training programme has started.[7]

5.5.3   Phase 3 – Verification requirements

During the verification phase (optional), the training provider will share more details and information (including course materials if appropriate) with the EU AB to show that the actions listed during the assessment phase have been completed.

5.6.   Duration and renewal of the EU Certificate of Recognition

In general, the EU Certificate of Recognition will be **valid for a period of three years**. The start and end date will be indicated on the certificate. During these three years, there is a notification requirement that all significant content changes to the Customs-specific part of the training programme need to be reported to the EC.

Overall, it is the responsibility of the training provider to manage its certificate. This means the training provider should request an extension when the end date of the current certificate is approaching. In this request, the training provider should indicate any changes during the three-year period and how these changes impacted the training programme. The academic study provider should also indicate whether they are aware of any updates to the CustComp[eu] or its associated Public and Private sector RTP for Academic Customs Education.

The EC will inform the training provider's appointed contact persons about their recognised programmes in an ad-hoc manner whenever the CustComp[eu] has been updated. In case the training provider is not fully aware of any changes, it is strongly recommended that they verify this with the contact person at the EC at least one year before the end date of the certificate. It is the responsibility of the training provider to follow up.

Important note:

 Upon renewal of the academic programme's accreditation, the applicant is responsible to submit the updated documentation (along with the English version) to the EC, via the functional mailbox EU-CertificateOfRecognition@ec.europa.eu

Renewal of the EU Customs Certificate of Recognition will not be possible if accreditation documentation has expired.

One of the following situations will apply to the training provider:

- **Situation 1 – No changes have been made to the CustComp[eu] for Customs and to the academic programme that obtained recognition:**
    - If, during the three years after which the academic programme obtained EU recognition, no changes have been made to the CustComp[eu] for Customs and its associated Public and Private sector RTP for Academic Customs Education, then the validity of the EU Certificate of Recognition can be extended without having to undergo the process again;
    - The request for extension must be approved officially by the EU AB. If it approves, recognition will be extended for three years.
    - The Extension EU Certificate of Recognition Form should be submitted.

- **Situation 2 – The CustComp[eu] for Customs has been updated after the academic programme obtained recognition:**

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[7] *The procedure to obtain recognition at national level should at least have been initiated, meaning that the initiation request has been submitted.*

- If, during the three years after which the academic programme obtained EU recognition, changes have been made to the CustComp^eu for the Customs and/or its associated Public and Private sector RTP for Academic Customs Education, then the validity of the EU Certificate of Recognition officially ends one year after the three-year period has ended. This will give the training provider seeking updated recognition one year to update the training programme without losing its recognition status;
- The academic studies provider/developer will be required to update their assessment materials at the end of this one year in order to align them with the updated version of the CustComp^eu for Customs and to apply for recognition again. The parts of the training programme that do not require updates can be re-used from the previous application.
- The application phase should be followed anew.

- **Situation 3 – The CustComp^eu for Customs has not been updated, but the training provider would like to update or has already updated the Customs-specific part of the academic programme itself:**

  - The training provider is requested to inform the EC of these changes. If there are changes to the content of the academic programme, the training provider is obliged to notify the EC within the three-year cycle;
  - The training provider will have to document how the new training parts replace the previous training parts;
  - When the end of the current certificate is approaching, the training provider needs to mention in their extension request what changes have been made (or will be made) to the academic programme. The EU AB will assess the new training parts and decide to grant or not to grant recognition for these updated training parts.
  - The application phase should be followed anew.

In all situations mentioned above, the training provider seeking updated recognition has a maximum of one year after the three-year recognition period to do so without losing the recognised status of their existing recognised training programme.

6. Instructions for the use of the EC logo by recognised Universities

Academic institutions that have received the EU Customs Certificate of Recognition for their academic programmes or modules within, **have the right** to use the **EC logo, provided that the following defined rules are respected**. The instructions for using the European Commission logo are described below:

- The **EU Customs Certificate of Recognition**, which includes the European Commission logo, can be **uploaded to the University's website**.

- The European Commission logo can be used by the awarded universities in their publications or websites **only accompanied by the EU recognition certificate statement** as follows:

a) **For recognised academic programmes:**

"The European Commission **recognises** the [**insert Bachelor's of Master's name**] delivered by the [**insert the name of the academic institute**] as a high-quality customs-specific study programme, that is in line with the EU Competency Framework for the Customs profession (CustCompEU) and its associated EU Reference Training Programmes for Academic Customs Education."

b) For recognised modules within academic programmes:

"The European Commission recognises the [**insert Bachelor's of Master's name**], delivered by the [**insert the name of the academic institute**], as a study programme containing high-quality customs-specific modules that are in line with the EU Competency Framework for the Customs profession (CustCompEU) and its associated EU Reference Training Programmes for Academic Customs Education."

- The European Commission logo should be **downloaded from** the following address: Standard European Commission logos | European Commission (europa.eu)

- The suitable European Commission **logo version** is the standard EC logo_vertical.

- The European Commission logo should be placed where it's the most appropriate, but it **cannot appear like a co-branding**, neither **give the impression that the communication is on EC behalf**.

- The European Commission logo **should not** be placed on communication materials that are **not related to the** EU Customs Certificate of Recognition initiative.

- The European Commission logo **should not** be used **to promote an activity**.

- When the validity of the certificate **expires**, the European Commission logo **cannot be used** anymore.

- Special attention should be paid to the **resolution** of the European Commission logo, which will vary as well:

  o Digital-> RGB / low resolution is fine

  o Print -> CMYK / high resolution

Contact

If you have questions regarding the use of the European Commission logo, please write directly to comm-visual-identity@ec.europa.eu

Useful sources

Europa page: European Commission visual identity | European Commission (europa.eu)

Guidelines for partner organisations: Use of the logo of the European Commission - Guidelines for partner organisations (europa.eu)

7. Liability

In no event shall the EU AB nor the EC be liable for any consequential, collateral, special or indirect damages (e.g. the following non-exhaustive list: loss of revenue, loss of profit, loss of data, loss of goodwill, loss of savings, interruption of business or claims by third parties), even if the EU AB and/or the EC has been advised of the possibility of such losses or damages. The training providers agree to indemnify both the EU AB and the EC against any damages or claims from customers/students, or from third parties.