



Quality Label for Badge Recognition

QUALITY LABEL FOR BADGE RECOGNITION

Structure, content and main features

The Quality Label for Badge Recognition (further referred to as Quality Label) signifies a commitment to upholding quality standards in badge-issuing activities. By fostering a community dedicated to delivering quality learning opportunities and skill recognition, it aims to offer additional credibility and reliability in recognising and promoting quality Open Badge issuance practices.

This document will provide insights into the Quality Label and its significance to the learning community across all sectors. It will also offer a comprehensive guide outlining the structure, criteria, and procedures for obtaining and maintaining the Quality Label.

1. WHO?

1.1. Who can receive the Quality Label?

Recipients of the Quality Label are **learning providers who issue digital Open Badges** in any education, learning and training field. They are committed to upholding Quality Label standards in their badge-issuing activities.

The Quality Label can be issued to any organisation or individual registered to a Cities of Learning or Awero platform with an **Organiser account**.

In this document, potential recipients of the Quality Label will be generally referred to as Organisers.

1.2. Who can issue the Quality Label?

The **Cities of Learning Network** is the sole official issuer of the Quality Label for Badge Recognition.

Cities of Learning Network members have necessary expertise and form a Quality Label assessment committee, following specific assessment guidelines, to evaluate the applications received.

The Quality Label committee, as detailed below, is responsible for making the final decisions to issue (or not) the Quality Label.

1.3. Who can endorse the Quality Label?

Endorsement is giving public approval and support for an Open Badge, an Activity or an Organiser. It shows trust, provides visibility and creates new opportunities.

Possible endorsers of the Quality Label can include **diverse stakeholders**, such as local, regional and national government institutions, public institutions, educational institutions (e.g. schools, universities, vocational training centres etc.), employers and businesses, NGOs and networks of organisations working in the field of education, training, learning and employment, at national and international level.

Receiving an endorsement from key stakeholders is **optional** for the Cities of Learning Network. However, it may be helpful to have endorsers at the national and local levels to support badge recognition better, and any statements of support for the Quality Label by important stakeholders at all levels will be valuable to promote it and increase its visibility and trustworthiness.

2. WHY?

2.1. Why should an Organiser apply for the Quality Label? What are the benefits?

The Quality Label can bring to its recipients an **increase in trust, credibility, recognition and visibility** by highlighting the quality of their badge-issuing activities both within and beyond their sector. The Quality Label will include the **essential data** (e.g., name of issuing body, date of issuing, validity, etc.) necessary for different institutions and organisations to recognise it more efficiently across sectors.

Moreover, getting the Quality Label and committing to upholding its criteria can **motivate an Organiser to offer qualitative content and activities**. The process of earning the Quality Label is in and of itself a learning experience that can help develop and improve skills and competencies related to badge recognition.

2.2. Why did the Cities of Learning Network decide to develop the Quality Label?

The Cities of Learning Network, as an issuer of the Quality Label, aims to build a more extensive community of badge issuers who are committed to using badges and **improving badges' quality and recognition**.

Quality Label holders will stand out among other badge issuers, and the Quality Label will help to **build trust and reputation for badges** as a tool for recognition, both for badge earners and stakeholders.

3. WHAT?

3.1. What are the key criteria to receive the Quality Label?

The Cities of Learning Network identified the following key criteria for an Organiser to be eligible to receive the Quality Label:

- Being **registered** on a Cities of Learning or Badgecraft platform and having a **verified Organiser** account;
- Actively **promoting and using Open Badges** for recognition;
- Committing to upholding the **quality** standards defined by the Quality Label and to **continuous improvement** in badge recognition;
- Adhering to the **Cities of Learning Network values** and declaring their continuous intention and commitment to providing **qualitative learning content**;
- Completing a specific, standardised Quality Label **training course** in the form of an online learning playlist;
- Providing **evidence of competence** in quality badge issuing;
- Passing an **evaluation process** by the Cities of Learning Network.

The **indicators** related to these criteria are further detailed [in this document](#) and are divided into three categories as follows:

1. **Craftsmanship**, including indicators focused on the quality and expertise demonstrated by the Organiser in designing, implementing, and maintaining Open Badges;
2. **Service**, including indicators focused on the Organiser's commitment to ethical practices, inclusivity, and support for stakeholders involved in badge recognition;
3. **Organisation and Management**, including indicators focused on the Organiser's effective leadership, implementation, and evaluation of badge recognition activities.

The Quality Label will have a **limited validity** to ensure that quality is maintained and upheld through time. Organisers can renew it **every three years** through a shortened evaluation procedure. Otherwise, it will expire and be revoked.

3.2. What are the main steps to receive the Quality Label?

The main steps to receive the Quality Label are:

1. To complete a specific online training course,
2. To submit an application form,

3. And to pass a formal evaluation process.

However, *before* an Organiser can embark on this journey, some essential conditions must be met: we will describe these as “step 0” because they are foundational steps into the process.

Step 0: The essentials

The aspiring Quality Label holder must [register as an Organiser](#) on the Cities of Learning platform and **request verification** for their Organiser account.

The Organiser should **review information** about all the steps to complete to get the Quality Label, which is made available on the platform, and about the [values of the Cities of Learning Network](#), which they must be willing to adhere to.

Step 1: Training

The Organiser (at least one staff member) **must complete a specific Quality Label online playlist**, which will help to learn how to create and issue quality badges and guide the Organiser through the process of becoming “Quality Label ready”.

Cities of Learning Network members will review evidence in a standardised way and assess the participants’ learning outcomes.

The Quality Label playlist covers the following main topics:

- Essentials about Open Badges (i.e. what are badges, different types of badges, different values of a badge, how to create and ways of issuing them, etc.);
- Quality criteria for quality badges: description, indicators, connection with frameworks, and process of assessment/issuing;
- Practice: creating quality badges and submitting them for assessment as practice, and then making actual activities with quality badges on the Cities of Learning platform;
- Proposing a plan for how badges might be integrated into the Organiser’s work;

Quality Label: what it is and how to get it.

Step 2: Applying

The Organiser, now experienced in issuing quality badges and informed about the Quality Label’s requirements, can complete a self-assessment and fill in a specific **online application form** to request the Quality Label.

They should provide as **evidence** links to badges earned from the Quality Label playlist (showing the expertise of the Organiser’s staff) and quality badges created and issued as an Organiser (showing adherence to the established quality standards).

They should also provide a **declaration** of their willingness and commitment to adhere to the

values of the Cities of Learning Network and provide **qualitative learning content**.

Step 3: Assessment process

A trained experts' panel within the Cities of Learning Network evaluates and assesses the Organiser's application, checking all submitted evidence, and provides feedback to the Organiser in a maximum of **90 days**.

If the Organiser fulfils the necessary requirements, as described in the following chapter, the Quality Label is issued and it is made clearly visible on the Cities of Learning platform on the Organiser's profile.

Otherwise, if the Quality Label is not granted, the Organiser will receive detailed feedback on which areas of their application need improvement and can try again.

Applications should be submitted in English, but the Cities of Learning Network recognises the possibility that some applicants can submit their application and/or provide some of the evidence in a language different from English.

The Cities of Learning Network can guarantee the assessment of applications/evidence submitted in languages different from English only when there is a native speaker of the chosen language on the assessment board.

Languages currently available, besides English, are Catalan, Dutch, Italian, Lithuanian, Serbian, Slovene and Spanish.

4. HOW?

4.1. How does the assessment process of Quality Label applications work?

The Cities of Learning Network, as an issuer of the Quality Label, will assess and evaluate all applications received.

An **assessment board of 3-5 evaluators** will be elected within the Cities of Learning Network, always including at least one member of the coordination trio of organisations leading the Network. The board members will assess the applications received and decide whether to issue each Quality Label.

Each application will be evaluated by two assessors, one of which should come from the same country and/or speak the same language as the applying Organiser. They will then report to the assessment board, which will decide to issue the Quality Label together. A decision should be made and communicated to the applicant **90 days** after applying.

Assessors will follow a specific Quality Label assessment guide.

The **Quality Label is issued** if an applicant matches at least xx% of the criteria/indicators.

Suppose an applicant matches less than xx% of the criteria/indicators, the **Quality Label is not issued**, and the applicant will receive feedback from the assessment team explaining the reasons for rejection.

An Organiser who didn't match enough criteria for receiving the Quality Label on the first attempt **can apply again with a simplified procedure** considering received feedback on which areas to focus on for increasing quality. They will have a deadline by which they'll need to submit evidence only for areas previously marked as needing improvement.

4.2. How shall compliance be ensured after receiving the Quality Label?

Once the Quality Label is issued, it has a **validity period of 3 years**. The Organiser should then **renew it** by following a shortened procedure aimed at assessing whether the Organiser is consistently compliant with the Quality Label standards, e.g. by providing evidence of at least one of their current staff members having completed the Quality Label playlist and submitting proof of having issued at least three quality badges in the past six months.

The Cities of Learning Network's assessment board will evaluate applications to renew the Quality Label and make a decision, which will be communicated to the Organiser in a maximum of 90 days.

The Quality Label may be **revoked before its expiry date** by the Cities of Learning Network if the Network receives any well-founded reports of non-compliance about a Quality Label holder. The assessment board will investigate such reports before any decision is taken. If their Quality Label is revoked ahead of time, the Organiser will be notified via email.

5. Documentation to support the Quality Label implementation

Further information about the Quality Label, as well as all the practical documentation needed for applying, can be found here:

- **Application form & Guidelines for filling in the application**
- **Quality Label learning playlist**
- **Self-assessment forms** (simple checklists and frameworks for Organisers to assess how ready they are to apply for the Quality Label)
- **Assessment guide (for evaluators)**
- **FAQ** about the Quality Label