SD-6

Provisions Governing Qualification

Qualified Products Lists
and
Qualified Manufacturers Lists

Defense Standardization Program

February 2014

STDZ

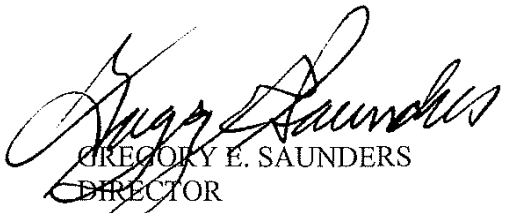
FOREWORD

This document is issued pursuant to the qualification policies and procedures contained in DoDM 4120.24, *Defense Standardization Program (DSP) Procedures*.

These provisions are issued as guidance for manufacturers and their authorized distributors who wish to submit products for qualification by the Department of Defense. A product may be qualified only when the governing federal or defense specification or non-government standard contains a requirement for qualification. Lists are not otherwise established for qualification.

Applicants applying for qualification should address inquiries to the Government activity identified in the specification under which the applicant seeks to qualify a product or process. Additional information as to the policies and procedures use by the Department of Defense for establishing electronic Qualified Products Lists (QPLs) or Qualified Manufacturers Lists (QMLs) in the Qualified Products Database (QPD) is available in the current issue of the DoDM 4120.24, which is available at www.dtic.mil/whs/directives or www.dsp.dla.mil.

Recommended changes to this publication should be sent to the Defense Standardization Program Office, 8725 John J. Kingman Road, Stop 5100, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-6220 or email at DSPO@dla.mil.



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CHAPTER 1:

THE QUALIFICATION PROGRAM

WHAT IS QUALIFICATION?

Qualification is a process in advance of, and independent of, an acquisition by which a manufacturer's capabilities or a manufacturer's or distributor's products are examined, tested, and approved to be in conformance with specification requirements, and subsequent approval for inclusion of products in an electronic qualified products list (QPL) or manufacturers in an electronic qualified manufacturers list (QML), which are part of the Qualified Product Database (QPD). Criteria for retention of qualification are applied on a periodic basis to ensure continued integrity of the qualification status. Before an electronic QPL or QML can be established, an approved and dated federal or defense specification or a non-government standard (NGS) must exist which requires qualification and sets forth the qualification examination, tests, and criteria for retention. (See DoDM 4120.24).[1]

Testing for conformity to the requirements of a specification in advance of, and independent of, a specific acquisition (contract award) is known as qualification testing.

The primary benefit of qualification is that it improves the availability of products and shortens the procurement process by completing long or highly complex evaluations and tests of manufacturers or products prior to award of contract. Qualification improves readiness by improving the availability of products with requisite quality, reliability, performance, and safety. Qualification can also help reduce costs by eliminating repetitive surveillance audits and tests.

Qualified Products Database

In the past, manufacturers or distributors that successfully qualified their products to a federal or defense specification or non-government standard had their products or processes listed on a paper or portable document format (PDF) QPL or QML. In April 2006, the DoD began transitioning from paper and PDF media to electronic QPLs and QMLs with the information housed in an online, searchable Qualified Products Database (QPD). The QPD can be accessed through the Acquisition Streamlining and Standardization Information System (ASSIST) at https://assist.dla.mil.

Qualified Products List

A QPL focuses on qualifying products or families of products. A QPL will normally be appropriate for items of supply that have a stable design/composition and will be continually available for an extended period of time, thereby making it practicable to qualify individual

[1] Available from www.dtic.mil/whs/directives

products without incurring prohibitive testing costs. A product that meets the established qualification requirements will be listed in an electronic QPL.

Qualified Manufacturers List

A QML focuses on qualifying an envelope of manufacturer's materials and processes rather than individual products. A QML will normally be appropriate for items of supply that experience very rapid technological advances or have a myriad of variations or custom designs that make individual product qualification impractical or excessively expensive. A QML applies to processes or materials that generally meet the following criteria:

1. They do not have recognized industry part numbers.

2. They are procured to a specification that covers a wide range of technologies—such as hybrid microcircuits.

3. They are a family of products with similar characteristics—such as printed wiring boards.

Representative worst case test vehicles or representative samples that contain all potential combinations of materials and processes used during production are carefully examined to determine acceptability limits. As evidence that those processes and materials meet the established qualification requirements, the envelope of acceptable processes and materials will be listed on an electronic QML.

Intent of a QPL or a QML

An electronic QPL or QML allows the manufacturer to provide, and the purchaser to obtain, satisfactory pre-contractual evidence that a product or a family of products has been tested and has met the requirements of the applicable specification. The purpose is to:

1. Establish and standardize the requirements for evidence of manufacturer's capability in advance of acquisition.

2. Reduce acquisition lead time.

3. Reduce test costs by minimizing redundant, long, and expensive tests.

4. Provide an additional tool for optimizing the relationship between engineering risk and quality assurance cost.

5. Improve readiness through continuous availability of reliable products from viable suppliers.

6. Establish a long-term relationship with the supplier to ensure continuous conformance to requirements and continuous products quality improvements.

What Qualification Does Not Do

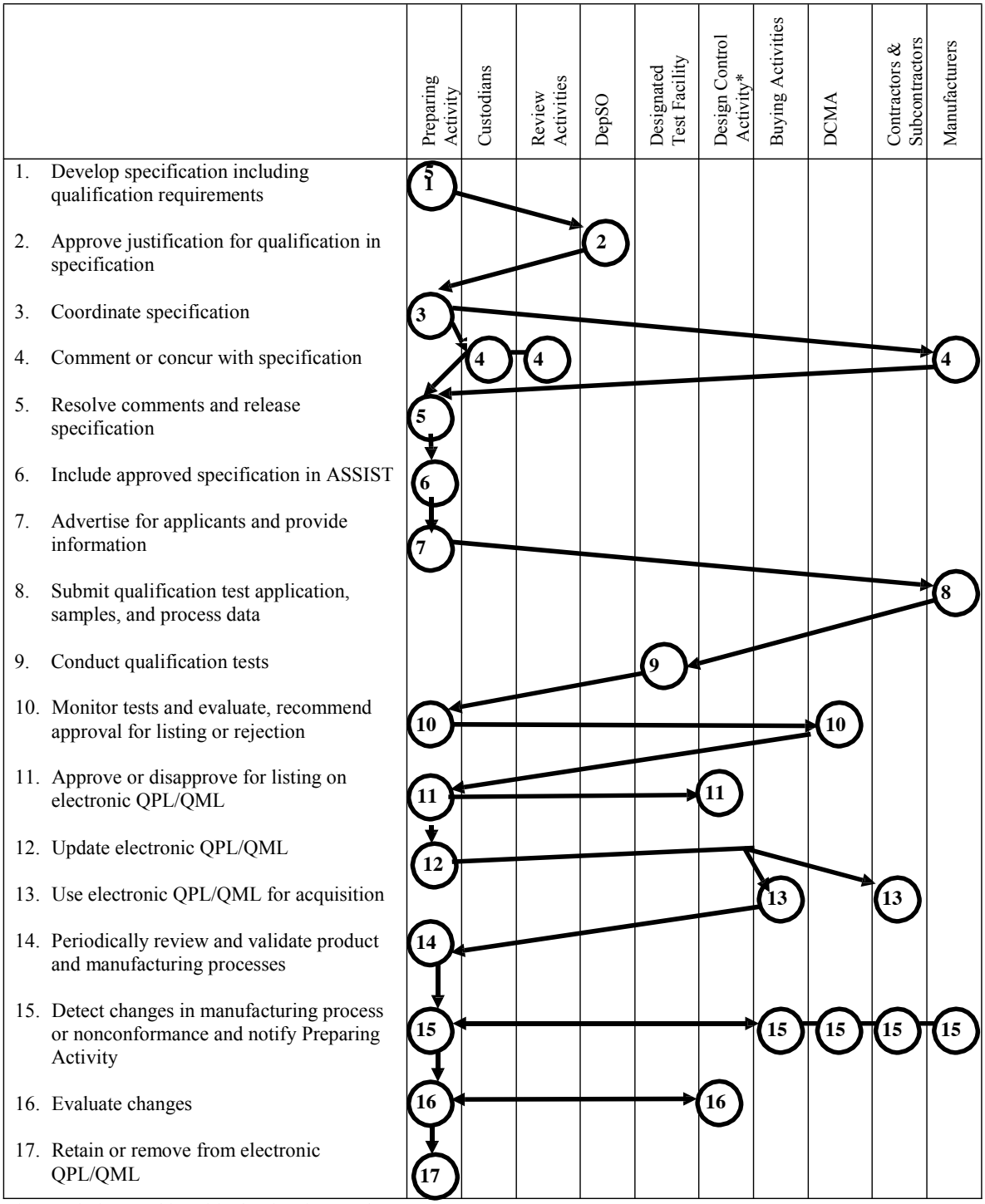
Inclusion of a product or a manufacturer on an electronic QPL or QML does not relieve the supplier of his contractual obligation to deliver items meeting all specification requirements. It does not guarantee acceptability under a contract. It does not waive any requirements for inspections or for maintaining quality control measures satisfactory to the Government, nor does it relieve the original equipment manufacturer of his contractual obligations to ensure that delivered items (including the qualified items used in the equipment) comply with all specification requirements.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR QUALIFICATION?

The Preparing Activity for a specification is responsible for qualification, however, the Preparing Activity can have an agent maintain the specification for them. In many cases, the Preparing Activity is also the Qualifying Activity. The Preparing Activity can establish a Qualifying Activity or agent to administer the qualification program, or perform certain elements of the qualification program. Adopted NGSs are assigned to an adopting activity, so, hereafter the term "Preparing Activity" also means the "Adopting Activity."

QUALIFICATION PROCESS MANAGEMENT

Figure 1-1, *Qualification Process Management,* shows the general DoD qualification process.



*For aviation or ship critical safety item only

Figure 1-1. Qualification Process Management.

CHAPTER 2:

QUALIFICATION POLICIES

APPLICATION FOR QUALIFICATION

A manufacturer's application for qualification is made by letter or other appropriate media as requested by the Qualifying Activity. The manufacturer's application is addressed to the activity indicated in the "Notes" section (Section 6) of the applicable specification.

All applicants must have an active Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) code, for the supplier or authorized distributor, and all plants at which the product will be manufactured. If a supplier or manufacturing plant does not have a CAGE Code, a CAGE Code may be obtained without charge by following the procedures at www.sam.gov.

Each application contains the number and date of the specification under which tests are desired and the type, grade, class, or other specification designation of the product. The application also includes the brand designation for the product and the exact location (including the CAGE Code) of the plant at which the product was manufactured. When the applicant is a distributor, the name and CAGE Code of the plant location of the actual manufacturer will be included.

If the tests are to be conducted in a facility other than one owned or operated by the Government, the location of the facility will be furnished, and with the initial application only, an annotated list of test equipment will be provided. The list will include the equipment's and the manufacturer's names, the type or model number, and the serial or inventory number. Information about equipment accuracy, limits, and the frequency of calibration will be included. The latest date and place of calibration will be given, and when specifically requested, the calibration will be traced to national or other recognized standards.

In addition, the application includes certification that the applicant:

1. Agrees to be bound by all of the provisions and terms set forth in this document.

2. Is the manufacturer of the product or a distributor authorized by the manufacturer to distribute the product with the manufacturer's brand or to rebrand and distribute the product under his own brand and designation. A distributor who rebrands will furnish certification from the actual manufacturer that he is authorized to rebrand and distribute the product with his own brand designation.

3. Has determined from actual tests (within the limits of test equipment commonly available, unless otherwise specified) that the product conforms to the applicable specification. (Test reports and data should be furnished with the application.)

4. Will supply products for test which are samples from the manufacturer's normal production.

5. Will supply products that meet the requirements of the specification in every respect.

6. Will overcome deficiencies disclosed by qualification testing.

7. Will not apply for a retest of the product until satisfactory evidence is furnished that any defects disclosed by previous tests have been corrected. Test reports may be required as evidence.

8. Will not state or imply in advertising or otherwise that a product (or products) that has received DoD qualification approval is the only product of that type so qualified, or that DoD in any way recommends or endorses the product.

9. Will notify the Qualifying Activity of any change in design, material, manufacturing processes (including quality control), or plant location after qualification approval. As part of the notification, the applicant will state whether he believes the change will affect the capability of the product to meet the qualification test requirements. He will state whether the changes will affect the applicant's brand designation for the product, and he will state whether he intends to submit new samples for testing or desires to have his product removed from the electronic QPL or QML.

10. Will, when requested by the Qualifying Activity, submit certification (Certification of Qualified Products, DD Form 1718 or equivalent questionnaire) signed by a responsible official of management, attesting that the listed product(s) or process(s) are still available from the listed plant, can be produced under the same conditions as originally qualified (i.e., same process, materials, design, manufacturer's part number or designation), and meet the requirements of the current issue of the specification.

11. Will include provisions for self-audit of the processing, fabrication, assembly, inspection, and testing of the product. The results of the self-audit program, which promptly reports nonconformance (deviations) and corrective action to management, will be made available upon request.

12. Has maintained, and will continue to maintain, effective management for quality, clearly prescribed and documented by the manufacturer. Manufacturer personnel performing quality functions will have sufficient, well-defined responsibility, authority, and the organizational freedom to identify and evaluate product quality problems and to initiate, recommend, and enforce solutions. Management will periodically review the status of the quality program for effectiveness.

13. Will submit a statement signed by a responsible official of management that if the product or the process is removed from the electronic QPL or QML, the manufacturer will take the responsibility of notifying its customers and distributors within 3 working days of notification of removal. The Government reserves the right to publicize this

removal, including the reason for removal, when it deems necessary. The Government may exercise this right through such channels as the Federal Business Opportunities (*FedBizOpps)*, Government-Industry Data Exchange Program (GIDEP), or trade publications and associations.

14. Agrees to provide the Government access, upon request, to technical records, personnel, and facilities pertaining to manufacturing, processing, inspection, and testing to assure compliance with all the specification requirements.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO SUPPORT THE APPLICATION

In certain cases, the Government may find the information required above insufficient to justify an authorization for qualification testing. In those cases the Qualifying Activity may request the following information, which is to be provided at no cost to the Government:

1. The rate at which the applicant can produce the product with his present plant facilities.

2. Sketches, photographs, descriptive booklets, or other technical literature bearing upon the product that will assist the Government in obtaining a clear conception of the product or process the applicant is offering.

3. Such additional information as is required by the applicable specification.

Data Required

When requested by the Qualifying Activity, the applicant will furnish, at no cost to the Government for test record purposes, copies of any detailed plans, specification test results, or other data required (number required and the media will be specified by the Qualifying Activity). If such data includes information that the applicant has determined is proprietary and does not wish disclosed to the public or used by the Government for any purpose other than testing the product or process for which qualification is desired, the applicant will identify and mark the data which he considers to be proprietary, and insert the following legend on each sheet containing proprietary data:

> "*These data are considered by the supplier to be submitted in confidence and furnished for the purpose of facilitating qualification testing and are not to be disclosed outside the Government nor to be duplicated, used, or disclosed in whole or in part, for any purpose other than to evaluate the product submitted for qualification testing. This restriction does not limit the Government's right to use information contained in such data if it is obtained from another source."*

Government's Obligations on Availability of Data

Except as required by the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552[2], the Government will not distribute qualification data unless the Qualifying Activity obtains the consent of the manufacturer, determines that the release is in the best interest of the Government, and follows current security policies. Once release is approved, the Qualifying Activity may supply the data to other Government activities and supply the data to foreign governments that are purchasing, operating, or maintaining supplies that involve products covered.

EXTENSION OF QUALIFICATION

Qualification applies only to the product, process, or material that is manufactured at the plant that produced, examined, and tested the sample. The Qualifying Activity may, however, extend qualification to the same product or family of products produced by the same or other plants of the manufacturer when the following conditions exist:

1. Examination or test of the product of other manufacturing plants shows that the product is, in all aspects, at least equal to the initial qualified product test sample.

2. The quality control and processing at the other manufacturing plants are such that the products produced there are at least equal to the qualified product. Ordinarily, this determination will be based on inspection of the plant, its quality control system, and its processing procedures. If a facility or product line, or both, come under new ownership and management, the Qualifying Activity must reevaluate to ensure that the product or process is unchanged and that the new ownership and management can provide products of the requisite quality, reliability, and safety. The Qualifying Activity will document the evaluation and retain it in the permanent file.

Listing of Extended Qualified Products

Products to which qualification has been extended under the family of products concept are listed on the appropriate portion of the QPL in the same manner as tested products, except that the manufacturer's designations or type numbers of the successfully tested products on which the family qualification has been based will be listed in the place normally reserved for the test or qualification reference test report number.

RETENTION OF QUALIFICATION

Once a manufacturer’s products or processes are qualified, the manufacturer must do the following to retain the qualification:

[2] Available at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/...2011.../USCODE-2011-title5-partI-chap5.pdf

1. Certify that the listed product is still available from the listed plant, can be produced under the same conditions as originally qualified, and meets the requirements of the current issue of the specification. This certification must be done every two years or as specified in the specification, unless the requirement is waived by the Qualifying Activity.

2. Periodically submit new test data (if required in the specification or requested by the Qualifying Activity).

3. Complete requalification testing (if required in the specification or by the Qualifying Activity).

CHAPTER 3:

THE QUALIFICATION PROCESS

INITIAL QUALIFICATION PROCEDURES

Request for Qualification by Manufacturer

The Qualifying Activity should send applicants the following information as soon as possible after their requests for qualification have been received:

1. A reference to the Acquisition Streamlining and Standardization Information System (ASSIST) at http://quicksearch.dla.mil or https://assist.dla.mil for an electronic copy of the latest issue of the specification.

2. A reference to ASSIST for a copy of this document (SD-6) with a specific request for the necessary information and certification.

3. A schedule of charges for qualification testing, if applicable.

4. Facilities survey requirements, when applicable.

5. A statement that no qualification testing will be authorized until the applicant has been notified in writing that the required information has been received and determined to be satisfactory.

6. Any other information, such as reports.

Request for Qualification by Authorized Distributor

An authorized distributor may be listed on an electronic QPL or QML. When an authorized distributor wishes to qualify a product carrying its own brand designations, the distributor requests the manufacturer to certify that the distributor is authorized to rebrand and distribute the product with the distributor's brand designation. When the authorized distributor is certified to rebrand the part, the original part manufacturer's identification will be included on the part. If there is not enough space on the part for the authorized distributor's rebrand and the original manufacturer's identification, a code symbol for the original manufacturer will be used. The original manufacturer's identification or the original part manufacturer's code symbol allows traceability to the original manufacturer for failure analysis, corrective action, and lot identification.

When the authorized distributor furnishes such certification, the distributor will provide a sample of the rebranded product for qualification. The authorized distributor does not perform qualification examination and testing until directed by the Qualifying Activity. The Qualifying Activity may extend qualification approval to the rebranded product without further test, if the manufacturer certifies that the rebranded product is the same as the product previously qualified under the manufacturer's designation. The authorized distributor submits its brand designation, its name and CAGE Code, the name and CAGE Code of the actual manufacturer, and the CAGE Code of the plant at which the product was manufactured. Authorization for a distributor to rebrand applies only to products listed on a valid electronic QPL or QML at the time of the rebrand request.

Furnishing Products Not Requiring Additional Listings

To be eligible for award of a contract, an authorized distributor must state in his or her bid the name of the actual manufacturer, the address of the plant where the product was manufactured, the CAGE Code of the plant where the product was manufactured, the brand designation, and the qualification test reference. Additionally, the supplier must certify that the product being offered to the Government has not been added to or changed in any way by the supplier, and is the product of the manufacturer that is listed on the electronic QPL or QML. Additional listing of the product on the electronic QPL or QML is required only when the product is rebranded with the brand designation of an authorized distributor.

Manufacturing Facilities (Plant) Audit (Survey)

When the Qualifying Activity requires a facilities audit, the audit will be conducted before authorization of test and will apply to both domestic and foreign manufacturers. Facilities audits for products will be conducted when specified in the specification, or when otherwise necessary (e.g., fraud, non-compliance, etc.) to assure product compliance with the specification requirements.

Inspection systems, quality and reliability assurance programs, test facilities, processes, materials, production facilities, test capability, and incoming inspection may be audited. The audit will verify that the manufacturer has an effective self-audit program.

If proprietary products or processes are involved, that portion of the audit must be performed by, and any access to the proprietary information must be limited to, employees of the Government who have a need to know the information. The Government will handle all proprietary data in a controlled and secure manner to ensure that no unauthorized dissemination occurs. The Government maintains qualification data and reports for its records. Proprietary information, commercially sensitive data, or matters relating to national security should be appropriately identified in the audit report as "restricted for release." This identification notifies the Government of information that requires protection from release to other sources. No request for such information will be accommodated, unless the Government determines that the information was either incorrectly restricted by the contractor or is already available to the public. The

Government will not release restricted data until the manufacturer who furnished the information is notified and has the opportunity to object to the release. If the manufacturer objects, the qualification data will only be released as required by the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.[3]

Notification of Test Results (Qualification Approval)

The Qualifying Activity will provide the test results to the manufacturer and inform him whether or not the product or process has qualified. If a product or process fails to qualify, the Qualifying Activity will inform the manufacturer promptly and furnish specific reasons as to why the testing was not approved. When a product is qualified, a letter of notification will be sent to the manufacturer; the authorized distributor (if they are the applicant) and to GSA (if a federal specification is involved). As a minimum, the letter of notification will include:

1. Government designation under which the product qualified (type, class, or other designation, as shown on the specification).

2. The applicant's brand designation for the specific product, family of products, or processes.

3. The test or qualification reference (test report number) assigned to the products or sample test specimen.

4. The CAGE Code and address associated with the supplier to which correspondence is sent.

5. The CAGE Code and address associated with each plant that manufactured the product, family of products, or test specimen, submitted for test.

Notification Letter Stated Conditions

The letter of notification will state the following conditions regarding the listing:

1. The electronic QPL/QML does not guarantee acceptance of the product in any future purchase.

2. The electronic QPL/QML does not constitute a waiver of any requirements of the specification or of the provisions of any contract.

3. Any use of the listing for publicity, advertising, or sales will not state or imply that the product or the process is the only one of that type so qualified, or that the Government in

[3] Available at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/...2011.../USCODE-2011-title5-partI-chap5.pdf

any way recommends or endorses the manufacturer's product in preference to other qualified products. Violation is cause for removal from the electronic QPL/QML.

4. The electronic QPL/QML applies only to products produced in, or processes used in, the plant specified in the letter of notification. The listing is effective at 8:00 a.m. (local time of the Qualifying Activity) as of the date of the letter of notification.

5. The electronic QPL/QML applies to amendments or revisions of the specification, unless otherwise notified.

6. The electronic QPL/QML applies only to products or processes identical to those qualified (or to products defined in the family of products granted qualification coverage). The Qualifying Activity must be advised in advance of any intended change to a qualified product or process and must be provided with a complete description of the change. Failure to notify the Qualifying Activity of any change is cause for removal from the electronic QPL/QML regardless of the extent of the change.

7. Manufacturers must comply with the requirements for retention of qualification to retain the electronic QPL/QML. Failure to comply will be sufficient cause for removal from the electronic QPL/QML.

Figure 3-1 is a flow chart of the above process.

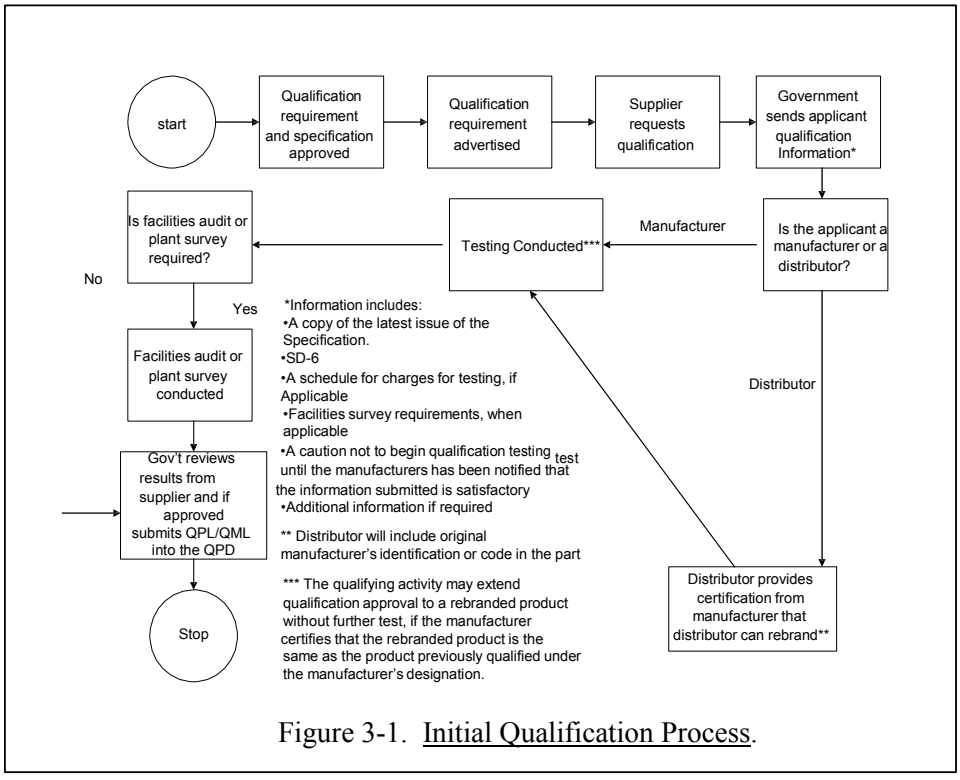


Figure 3-1. Initial Qualification Process.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Manufacturer's Obligations

The manufacturer will maintain process and quality control procedures that ensure that the items continually comply with all specification requirements. He will immediately report any discrepancies disclosed during testing or periodic reexamination of the product and his production process controls to the Qualifying Activity and GIDEP. He will ensure that delivered items continually conform to all specified product performance, quality, and reliability requirements.

Manufacturer's Limitations

A manufacturer may advertise that a qualified product has received DoD qualification, but may not state or imply that the product is the only one of that type so qualified or that the Department of Defense in any way recommends or endorses the manufacturer's product in preference to the other qualified products. Violation will be cause for removal of the product or the manufacturer from the electronic QPL or QML and possible suspension, debarment, or referral for criminal investigation. Further, if the product is not actually listed on an electronic QPL or QML, or if a letter of notification of approval has not been received from the Qualifying Activity, the manufacturer may not:

1. State, certify, or mark products as QPL or QML.

2. Advertise that products are on the electronic QPL or QML.

3. In any way imply that a product is qualified.

User Obligations

Users of the electronic QPL or QML will take necessary measures to ensure that the qualified products comply with the applicable specification requirements. In support of the qualification program, the procuring activity for a qualified product is required to, and users of the list are encouraged to:

1. Promptly report to the Qualifying Activity and to the manufacturer any known or suspected nonconformance of military qualified products.

2. Submit to the Qualifying Activity periodic summaries of receiving, inspection, and in-plant quality control monitoring results that reveal adverse quality and reliability trends.

3. Provide feedback data to the Qualifying Activity, based on field information to the Qualifying Activity and to the manufacturer to support continuous improvement of the process.

Government Obligations

Initial or periodic Government surveillance conducted by the Qualifying Activity or the delegated Government quality assurance representatives does not relieve the manufacturer, authorized distributor, or user of the list of the responsibility to exercise adequate process and product quality control procedures. The Qualifying Activity will serve as the Department of Defense focal point to consolidate findings and recommend corrective action for qualification problems.

Depending on the gravity of the problem, contract administration activities may refuse to accept suspect end items until the problem is resolved or the contractor's compliance with contract requirements has been verified. The Government will not knowingly accept material that contains suspected nonconforming parts.

The Qualifying Activity will notify those agencies responsible for acceptance of end item equipment. It will advise them of the nature of the problem and the degree of risk and urgency in the situation, and if necessary, call a meeting to discuss the problem.

The Qualifying Activity will also indicate the action taken with the supplier or determine the action required. It will disseminate information immediately including potential operation problems if items are built into equipment.

If necessary, the Qualifying Activity will establish a task force to investigate the problem and develop a recommended solution. It will disseminate the information to Government and industry parties affected by the action. Recommendations should include enough engineering data that decisions can be made concerning the identification and disposition of nonconforming items.

Government Obligations for Nonconforming Products

The following actions will occur when the possibility of nonconforming products is suspected regarding a qualified product:

1. The activity that discovers or receives a report of a potential problem will notify the Qualifying Activity.

2. The Qualifying Activity will conduct a preliminary evaluation, suspend the manufacturer from further shipping the suspected QPL/QML product, and complete a risk assessment of the problem.

3. The Qualifying Activity will notify the specification's Preparing Activity, the DSPO, the appropriate quality and procurement offices, the DepSOs, the other Government agencies, and the industry associations of the possible nonconformance (technical problem or specific violation) affecting field usage.

4. The Qualifying Activity will initiate corrective action plans (as applicable) and when necessary, initiate removal of parts or manufacturers from the electronic QPL or QML.

5. The Qualifying Activity will instruct manufacturers to prepare and coordinate issuance of a GIDEP ALERT or Problem Advisory. The Qualifying Activity should prepare and issue the GIDEP ALERT or Problem Advisory when the manufacturer is reluctant or slow in doing so. The Qualifying Activity should use GIDEP actions or Agency notices to notify part users of the problem.

6. The Qualifying Activity will have the manufacturer conduct a self audit to identify the problem areas and will have the manufacturer prepare a corrective action plan.

7. The Qualifying Activity will gather independent testing information and prepare verification action.

Retention of Qualification

To retain qualification approval of products, one of the following actions is required:

1. Certification by the manufacturer (See below).

2. Periodic submission of new test data as required in the specification or requested by the Qualifying Activity.

3. Complete requalification testing, as may be required in the specification or by the Qualifying Activity.

Manufacturer Certification of Qualification Status

Every two years, the Qualifying Activity will request that the manufacturer complete a DD Form 1718, "Certification of Qualified Products," or equivalent questionnaire, when the applicable specification does not contain a retention of qualification requirement. The form asks whether:

1. The listed product or products are still manufactured at the plants shown on the listing.

2. The plants are still under the same management.

3. The product is being manufactured under the same conditions as originally qualified, with the same process, materials, construction, design, and manufacturer's part number of designation.

4. The product meets the requirements and tests of the latest issue of the specification.

5. Any product change was made since the date the product was qualified.

Reexamination and Retest

The Qualifying Activity will determine, based on specification or product changes and other available data, whether items need to be removed from the electronic QPL or QML until retesting is complete, or whether removal can be delayed pending the outcome of the tests or receipt of additional data. If the Qualifying Activity retains the item on the electronic QPL or the QML, it establishes a maximum time limit for submission of the samples or test data before removal. The Qualifying Activity will require the reexamination of a qualified product:

1. If the manufacturer has modified the product or changed the material or processing so that the validity of previous qualification is questionable.

2. If the requirements in the specification have been revised to affect the characteristics of the product.

3. When questionable performance reports make it necessary to determine that the product continues to meet all the specification requirements.

4. When retention-of-qualification requirements in the specification require reexamination.

REMOVAL FROM A LISTING

When a manufacturer or authorized distributor fails to comply—or demonstrates an inability to comply—with specification requirements, the Qualifying Activity will remove the products from the electronic QPL, or remove applicable processes from the electronic QML. Removal could include a broad range of directly or indirectly affected products, possibly the manufacturer’s entire family of qualified products. The Qualifying Activity will also remove the manufacturer’s certification, and may direct the manufacturer to stop shipment, when such action is necessary to ensure that the manufacturer provides compliant products. The Qualifying Activity will not remove a product, a manufacturer, or a process from an electronic QPL/QML solely on the basis that the Qualifying Activity did not perform a facility (plant) audit within the planned audit cycle. Here are the circumstances under which adverse actions or removal might be warranted:

1. The product or process offered under contract does not meet the requirements of the specification.

2. The manufacturer has discontinued manufacture of the product.

3. The manufacturer or authorized distributor requests that their product or process be removed from the list.

4. One or more of the conditions under which qualification was granted has been violated.

5. The requirements of a revised or amended specification differ sufficiently from the previous issue so that existing test data are no longer applicable for determining compliance.

6. A manufacturer fails to notify the Qualifying Activity of a change in design, material, manufacturing, process (including quality conformance), or plant location.

7. The product is produced by a contractor, firm, or individual whose name appears on "The Excluded Parties List System (EPLS)."

8. The manufacturer has not complied with the retention of qualification requirements.

9. The manufacturer has violated the advertisement restrictions.

10. Performance, quality or reliability problems are detected in a manufacturer's products.

11. The manufacturer fails to comply with an audit or denial of access of authorized personnel to perform such an audit.

Procedures for Removal

The procedures below apply to removal of a product or a family of products from a listing:

If the decision to remove a product or process from a listing is made because of reasons 1, 4, 6, 8, or 9 above, the circumstances which gave rise to the action will be considered. The product or processes will be returned to the listing if the deficiencies are corrected to the Government's satisfaction.

Factors to be considered in making that determination are the seriousness of the deficiencies, the circumstances under which those deficiencies came to light (for example, Government audit or voluntary disclosure), and whether circumstances indicate that such actions were intentional, were fraudulently motivated, or reflect a repeated or continuing course of conduct.

When the decision has been made that a product, family of products, or process is to be removed from an electronic QPL or QML, the Qualifying Activity will send the manufacturer or authorized distributor a written notice (registered, with a return receipt requested) which describes the action taken and gives the reasons for removal. Unless the notice indicates

otherwise, removal from the electronic QPL or QML will be effective on the date of the notice. The Qualifying Activity will furnish copies of the notification of removal to interested DoD elements and other Government agencies.

Publication of Removal

When the Qualifying Activity determines that it would be in the Government's interest to notify government organizations and contractors that a product has been removed by adverse action, it will publish such notification in the *Federal Business Opportunities (FedBizOpps)*, with a GIDEP Alert, Problem Advisory, in related trade publications, or by other appropriate methods. The Qualifying Activity will publish such notification as soon as practicable.

The notification will include the electronic QPL or QML identification number, the name and title of the Government representative, and the name and address of the Qualifying Activity. It will also include a statement that "Notification is herewith given that the following product [for QML, process(es)] was removed from QPL-XXXXX (or QML-XXXXX) on (date)."

CHAPTER 4:

QUALIFICATION TESTING PROVISIONS

QUALIFICATION TESTS

Products will be tested and placed on electronic QPLs or QMLs in a way that will achieve economy for the Government and fair treatment for all manufacturers with the capability to meet the performance as defined by the requirements in the specification. The Qualifying Activity will not:

1. Authorize qualification examination and testing until an approved and dated specification is available.

2. Use test data collected outside the purview of qualification tests (for example, first article test data) as the basis for qualification approval, except in an emergency determined by the Qualifying Activity to be a "life- or mission-threatening situation," or unless the data was generated under the cognizance of the Qualifying Activity.

AUTHORIZATION FOR CONDUCTING QUALIFICATION TESTS

The Qualifying Activity will determine (upon the basis of the application, on-site inspection, if required, and other additional information) whether the test facilities proposed by the applicant are suitable and whether the applicant complies with the requirements of the provisions governing qualification.

Successful applicants will receive written authorization for conducting the qualification tests. Qualification testing may be conducted only after the Qualifying Activity has authorized such testing in writing. Unsuccessful applicants will be apprised of the basis of rejection and may reapply after the cause of rejection has been eliminated.

Tests will be conducted at the place specified in a letter of authorization sent by the Qualifying Activity. Testing may not be initiated prior to authorization of tests. The manufacturer and the test laboratories that perform the qualification testing will prepare a test report for submission to the Qualifying Activity as required. The costs of tests will normally be borne by the applicant. The letter authorizing the tests will state whether the cost of tests is to be borne by the Government, the applicant, or is to be shared (prorated) between them. The applicant may be required to pay the entire cost, or a large amount of the cost, of retesting his product after initial failure.

A letter (or form) authorizing the tests will be furnished to the applicant when the required information has been furnished and found satisfactory by the Qualifying Activity.

Action on Test Results

The Qualifying Activity will analyze the results of laboratory tests to determine if the product is qualified. The manufacturer will be notified of the results of the tests and will be informed whether or not his product or process qualifies under the requirements of the applicable specification. A copy of the letter will be furnished to the distributor, if the authorized distributor is the applicant. DoD policy is to have the manufacturer notify the responsible activity of any change in design, material, manufacturing processes (including quality control), or plant location. Thus, the notification letter will specify the changes that must be brought to the attention of the Qualifying Activity by the manufacturer.

Authorization for Retest

If qualification is disapproved or testing is discontinued, retesting of the product or process will not be authorized until satisfactory evidence is furnished to the activity responsible for qualification, or its authorized agent, that all of the defects which were disclosed by previous tests have been corrected. The Qualifying Activity is solely responsible for determining whether the evidence is satisfactory.

TEST LABORATORIES

Laboratories Owned by or Contracted to the Government

Samples for testing will be supplied by the applicant at no expense to the Government. The cost to be borne by the applicant, if any, will be stated in the letter authorizing the tests. The Government will not be responsible for any expense resulting from:

1. Shipment of the samples to or from the laboratory.

2. Damage during test.

3. Damage or loss of sample while at the laboratory.

The applicant will forward the product for test in accordance with the shipping instructions furnished in the letter authorizing the tests. Adequate operating instructions must be included. Testing will be undertaken as promptly as practicable after authorization. The following rules will apply:

1. The time of test will be set at the convenience of the Government. The applicant may observe, but not take an active part in, the test if he obtains permission from the laboratory in advance.

2. The applicant may make repairs and replacements after the product has been received at the laboratory or place of test, prior to test, if it is it evident that such repairs or replacements are required as a result of damage in shipment.

3. The applicant may make minor modifications to the product on the test floor if, in the opinion of the Qualifying Activity, such modification will improve the product sufficiently to enable it to meet the specification requirements. Any modification permitted will be recorded in the test report.

4. Major modifications are not permitted in the laboratory, except under unusual circumstances, and the laboratory will refer such cases in writing to the Qualifying Activity for decision as to whether or not the proposed changes will be permitted.

Qualification tests may be discontinued at the discretion of the testing laboratory at any time the product fails to meet any of the requirements of the specification.

If the applicant requests (and includes shipping instructions), samples will be returned "as is" after testing at the applicant's expense, unless they were destroyed in testing.

Non-Government Laboratories

The applicant will supply samples for testing at no expense to the Government. The Government will not be responsible for any expense associated with qualification tests in laboratories not operated by or contracted to the Government. Testing may be performed by the manufacturer when authorized by the Qualifying Activity.

TEST REPORTS

The results of the qualification tests will be documented in a test report to the Qualifying Activity. All tests required by the applicable specification will be performed, unless testing has been terminated because the product or process failed to pass a test.

Format

The manufacturer or the testing laboratory will prepare test reports in accordance with the instruction of the Qualifying Activity that include a title page, an abstract, and a basic section.

Cover or title page. The cover or title page will include the following information:

1. Date of report.

2. Test report number assigned by testing laboratory.

3. Specification title, number and date, including amendments and sheet numbers and dates.

4. Name and mailing address of the manufacturer and CAGE Code of the plant location.

5. When required by the Qualifying Activity, authorization for testing (reference to the letter authorizing the tests) and associated test report number.

6. Name and location of testing laboratory.

7. Purpose of tests (qualification, retention of qualification, or requalification).

8. Specification type, grade, class, or other designator with corresponding applicant's designation.

9. Proprietary marking, when applicable.

Abstract. A single page abstract synopsizing the performance and noting the numbers of samples that failed and passed the tests will be included.

Basic Section. The basic section will contain the following:

1. A listing and description of all test equipment used. The description will include the applicable specification paragraph, the equipment name and manufacturer (including type, model and serial or inventory number), and the date of calibration, if applicable, and (when requested) traceability of calibration to national or other recognized standards.

2. Summary test data sheets showing specification requirements and indicating average results if required by the specification and whether each unit passed or failed. Individual headings should be included on original data sheets, which will be forwarded to and retained by the Qualifying Activity.

3. A comparison of the test results with the specification requirements along with corresponding type, class, grade, or other specification designations and manufacturer's designation.

4. Original version of curves, graphs, photographs, or other descriptive material required by the Qualifying Activity.

The test report will be signed by a responsible officer or authorized representative of the testing laboratory or contractor. The above report will be prepared whether the samples pass or fail the tests required by the applicable specification.

Submission and Review of Test Report

The manufacturer or the testing laboratory as required by the Qualifying Activity will prepare and forward the specified number of copies of the test report (including, when specifically requested, original data records) to the Qualifying Activity.

The Government representative retains one copy of the report and forwards the other copies to the Qualifying Activity. Each copy of the report will bear the Government representative's certification as to its validity when requested by the Qualifying Activity. This certification is detailed enough to indicate the extent of observation of the tests, i.e., whether the observation was on a full-time basis or part-time basis. The extent to which the Government representative engaged in validating the tests will be indicated by his reflecting in his report, as appropriate, test operations and conditions which he was able to observe during the monitoring of the qualification tests and examinations.

Certification by the Government representative that the tests were monitored does not mean that the results are acceptable to the Government. Certification signifies only that the Government representative witnessed the conduct of the qualification examination and testing.

The Government representative's letter of transmittal contains his recommendation for action. The Qualifying Activity will determine whether the product conforms to the requirements of the specification, based on the test report, or on a recommendation from its agent, in conjunction with any other information available.

APPENDIX A:

DEFINITIONS

Activity. One of the organizational elements of the military departments, defense agencies. or civilian agencies.

Adopting activity. The activity responsible for the adoption of a non-government standard.

Agent. An activity which acts for, and by authority of, the Preparing Activity of a federal or defense specification (or adopting activity for a non-government standard). An agent may also administer QPLs and QMLs. The Preparing Activity retains responsibility and approval authority for the work accomplished.

Applicant. The manufacturer or distributor making application for qualification of a product.

ASSIST-Online is the Department of Defense's online index of specifications and standards. This online database lists defense and federal specifications and standards, guide specifications, defense handbooks, commercial item descriptions (CIDs), adopted non-government standards (NGS) and other related standardization documents used by the Department of Defense. The ASSIST-Online lists all electronic QPLs and QMLs

Civilian agency. A federal agency other than the Department of Defense.

Defense specification. A document that describes the essential technical requirements for purchased materiel that is military unique or a substantially modified commercial item.

Departmental Standardization Office (DepSO). A top-level office in each military department or defense agency responsible for managing the defense standardization program.

Distributor. Anyone authorized by the manufacturer to distribute the manufacturer's product. This also includes any distributor authorized by the manufacturer to rebrand and distribute a product under the distributor's own brand.

Federal specification. A specification issued or controlled by the General Services Administration (GSA) for commercial or modified commercial products, which contains requirements or tests too extensive to be suitable for a CID.

Manufacturer. The actual producer that is responsible for the fabrication or assembly of the final product, as defined by the specification.

Non-government standard (NGS). A national or international standardization document developed by a private sector association, organization, or technical society that plans, develops, establishes, or coordinates standards, specifications, handbooks, or related documents. This term does not include

standards of individual companies. Non-government standards adopted by the DoD are listed in the ASSIST database.

Preparing Activity. The DoD activity or the civilian agency responsible for the preparation, coordination, issuance, and maintenance of standardization documents.

Producer. The actual manufacturer of parts or materials that are not used as end items, but are processed or incorporated into designed equipment. This term distinguishes a producer from an equipment manufacturer who uses the parts and materials in his or her equipment.

Product. Includes materials, parts, components, subassemblies, assemblies, and equipment. The term "product" also encompasses a family of products. A family of products is defined as: all products of the same classification, design, construction, material, type, and other design characteristics; produced with the same production facilities, processes, and quality of material, under the same management and quality controls; but having the acceptable variety of physical and functional characteristics that is defined and specified in the applicable specification.

Qualification. A process in advance of, and independent of, an acquisition by which a manufacturer's capabilities, or a manufacturer's or distributor's products, are examined, tested, and found to be in conformance with specification requirements, and subsequent approval for inclusion of products in an electronic QPL or manufacturers in an electronic QML, which are part of the QPD.

Qualified Manufacturers List (QML). An electronic listing in the QPD of manufacturers' qualified processes and materials at each facility that have been successfully subjected to a defined set of qualification and periodic tests using processes, worst case designs or materials, to verify the end product's design, performance, quality, and reliability meet all the applicable specification requirements.

Qualified Product. A product that has been examined, tested, and listed in, or approved for inclusion in the applicable electronic QPL in the QPD.

Qualified Products Database (QPD). This database consists of the officially approved electronic QPLs and QMLs, and may be accessed through the Acquisition Streamlining and Standardization Information System (ASSIST) at https://assist.dla.mil. Only those electronic QPLs and QMLs in the QPD are the official source for qualified products and manufacturers.

Qualified Products List (QPL). An electronic listing in the QPD of products or families of products that have successfully completed the formal qualification process (including all specified periodic tests) that examines, tests, and verified that a specific product design meets all the applicable specification requirements.

Qualifying Activity. The activity that has been given responsibility to develop, implement, and maintain the qualification program as specified in the applicable specification, and authorized by its Departmental Standardization Office (DepSO) to input information into the QPD.

Specification. A document prepared to support acquisition that describes the essential technical requirements for purchased materiel and the criteria for determining whether those requirements are met.

Standard. A document that establishes uniform engineering or technical criteria, methods, processes, and practices.

Standardization document. A generic term for a document used to standardize an item of supply, process, procedure, method, data, practice, or engineering approach. Standardization documents include defense specifications, standards, and handbooks; federal specifications and standards; guide specifications; CIDs; and NGSs.

Supplier. Final source of a product to a customer that may be identified as a distributor, manufacturer, or other entity.

Testing laboratory. A laboratory that performs examination and testing. That laboratory may be one of the following:

- A laboratory operated by, or under contract to, the Government.
- A laboratory used by the manufacturer or distributor either in-plant or under contract.

APPENDIX B:

ACRONYMS

ASSIST	Acquisition Streamlining and Standardization Information System
CAGE	Commercial and Government Entity
CID	Commercial Item Description
DCMA	Defense Contract Management Agency
DepSO	Departmental Standardization Office
DoD	Department of Defense
DSP	Defense Standardization Program
DSPO	Defense Standardization Program Office
GIDEP	Government - Industry Data Exchange Program
GSA	General Services Administration
NGS	Non-Government Standard
PDF	Portable Document Format
QML	Qualified Manufacturers List
QPD	Qualified Products Database
QPL	Qualified Products List
U.S.C.	United States Code