Hong Kong Qualifications Framework

Qualifications Framework & Cross-Border Education

By David Yu

Qualifications Framework Secretariat
Hong Kong QF

• A major initiative by HK Government to support **life-long learning** and to enhance the **quality and competitiveness of the workforce**.

• **Qualifications Framework Secretariat (QFS)** – an executive body to oversee the development and implementation of QF under the policy steer of the **Education Bureau**.

• HKQF officially launched on **5 May 2008**
Main Features of HKQF

- HKQF is a **unitary framework** – covering the academic, vocational, continuing education and training sectors.
- Qualifications ordered in a **7-level hierarchy** (lowest Level 1 – highest Level 7)
Hierarchy of HKQF

**Qualifications in Academic Sector**
- Doctoral Degree
- Master Degree
- Bachelor Degree
- Associate Degree
- Diploma of Secondary Education
- Secondary Level Certificate
- Secondary Level Certificate

**Qualifications in Vocational/Continuing Education Sectors**
- Level 7
- Level 6
- Level 5
- Level 4
- Level 3
- Level 2
- Level 1

Qualifications to be systematically developed, quality assured and ordered under QF
Transparency of Qualifications under QF

- QF levels
- QF credits
- Award Titles
QA Mechanism

- HKQF underpinned by a robust quality assurance (QA) mechanism

- Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ)
  - Independent, statutory body for quality assurance;
  - Conduct professional accreditation of providers, training courses, and qualifications, under the QF
Qualifications Register (QR)

QR is web-based, containing information of QF-recognised qualifications, training courses and operators.

Available to the public **free of charge**

Over 7,300 courses listed on QR now

www.hkqr.gov.hk
Who are our stakeholders?

- Employers
- Employees
- Professional bodies
- Overseas QF bodies
- QA bodies
- Training & Education Providers
- Learners
How QF supports Life-long Learning

• Qualifications are **accredited** (quality assured);

• Qualifications are **level-rated**, with use of **credit size** and appropriate **qualification titles**;

• Education and training market - better **regulated**

• Learners - training programmes with more **transparent** learning outcomes
Skills Enhancement

• “Industry-led” approach to enhance quality and skills level of workforce

• Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) for individual industry

• Industries to define what they need and draw up the competency (occupational) standards of various job functions

• competency (occupational) standards closely aligned with manpower training
Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs)

- Composition: Representatives from employers, employees, professional bodies and the Government

- 19 industries, covering about 46% of total labour force (about 1.7 million workers), have set up ITACs

- Set up by the Education Bureau and served by the Qualifications Framework Secretariat
Industry Training Advisory Committees (2)

Key roles:

» To draw up the industry’s Specification of Competency Standards (SCS);

» To develop the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanism; and

» To promote QF in the industry to the practitioners
How QF supports Skills Enhancement in Industries

• Competency requirements and standards for individual profession, occupation, job, clearly defined;
• Manpower training and skill enhancement directly relevant to the requirements of the profession, occupation and jobs.
• Effectiveness of manpower training and skill level of workforce enhanced.
Specification of Competency Standards (SCS)

• A set of competency requirements and outcome standards at various QF levels for a specific industry

• The competency requirements and standards are broken down into Units of Competency (UoCs)

• Each UoC is designated a QF level and indicative credit size

• Drawn up based on extensive industry consultation and consensus
Major uses of SCS

- Human Resources Development & Management
  - e.g. in-house training, job specifications, recruitment

- Vocational Education & Training
  - e.g. SCS-based courses, SCS referencing, in-house training

- Basis for Benchmarking
  - e.g. Recognition of Prior Learning, benchmarking purpose by professional body
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

- Objectives – provide an alternative route for experienced practitioners without formal qualifications to receive formal recognition of knowledge, skills and experience gained from workplace
- for the purposes of learning articulation (for access to or seek advanced standing in a course) and/or certification of competencies (for job retention, mobility or progression)
Features of RPL

• Industry-led – implementation of RPL for a particular industry is contingent on the industry consensus of such a need

• an assessment process that assesses an individual’s non-formal and informal learning to determine whether that individual has mastered the required learning

• Standards-based and criterion-referenced – RPL clusters are benchmarked against the industry’s Specification of Competency Standards
International Collaboration

- **Scotland** - Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership (SCQFP) for cooperation on QF development

- **Mainland China** – Collaboration with Guangdong Occupational Skill Testing Authority on qualification benchmarking of occupational standards

- **New Zealand** – Cooperation with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) on QF development with the signing of an Cooperation Arrangement between New Zealand and Hong Kong
International Collaboration

- **Thailand** – Collaboration with Office of Education Council (OEC) and Thailand Professional Qualification Institute (TPQI) on development of NQF and Professional Qualifications Framework (PQF) respectively

- Other countries in which discussion on possible collaboration are in progress: Ireland; and Australia
Referencing / Alignment with Regional Qualifications Framework

• Referencing with EQF – dialogue established with European Commission (EC) on referencing HKQF to EQF with a view to:
  
  • enhancing the understanding of global standards, so as to upgrade own standards and improve the effectiveness of manpower training;
  
  • supporting mutual recognition of qualifications of other countries and facilitate mobility of students and education providers among countries
Qualifications Frameworks (QF) and Cross-Border Education (CBE)

• QFs have much to offer to CBE in respect of student and education provider mobility

• Student mobility:
  - learning programmes with clear & structured learning outcomes, QF level and credit, facilitate mutual recognition between qualifications
  - Credit accumulation & transfer mechanism allows easier measurement of learning achievements between qualifications
Qualifications Frameworks (QF) and Cross-Border Education (CBE) (2)

• Education provider mobility:
  ➢ Accreditation of non-local courses enhances confidence of the public in the quality standards of courses offered by the provider
  ➢ Benchmarking or referencing of levels of qualifications frameworks through participation in Regional Qualifications Framework
Thank You