

Legislative Council Panel on Manpower

**Progress Report on the Development and Implementation of the
Qualifications Framework**

Purpose

This paper updates Members on the latest position regarding the development and implementation of the Qualifications Framework (QF).

Background

2. The Government announced in 2004 the establishment of a QF to provide a platform to promote lifelong learning. QF is a seven level hierarchy covering qualifications in the academic, vocational and continuing education sectors. All qualifications recognised under QF are quality assured. The implementation of QF will benefit learners and help enhance the overall competitiveness of our workforce.

3. Over the past four years, the Education Bureau (EDB) has been working with relevant stakeholders, including employers, employees, trade unions, professional bodies, and education and training providers to build the infrastructure of QF. As a milestone development, the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance (AAVQO), Cap.592, which provides a legal framework for the accreditation of academic and vocational qualification under QF, commenced full operation on 5 May 2008.

Latest Developments

Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ)

4. AAVQO has specified HKCAAVQ as the Accreditation Authority under QF. It is entrusted with the responsibility for assuring the quality of qualifications and their associated learning programmes recognised under QF. To undertake this new role, HKCAAVQ has restructured its organisation to meet the needs of new clients and accreditation services, including the accreditation of vocational qualifications. It has also developed new operation models, accreditation approaches, and procedures to suit new requirements and standards of QF.

Qualifications Register (QR)

5. The QR is the public face of QF. It is a centralized web-based database containing information on qualifications and their respective learning programmes that are quality assured and recognised under QF. As at 1 October 2008, there are about 3 700 academic and vocational qualifications registered in QR. To encourage registration of qualifications in QR, financial assistance is provided to subsidize the registration fees.

Industry-led Development

6. To help ensure that education and training programmes provided for an industry meet its specific manpower needs, we have been assisting

industries to set up Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) to develop Specifications of Competency Standards (SCSs) for the industries. We have so far set up ITACs for 12 industries¹, covering over 760 000 employees (approximately 20% of the labour force). We will continue to reach out to employers, employees, professional bodies and other stakeholders with a view to setting up more ITACs in a gradual manner.

7. Six ITACs have completed drafting of the SCSs (i.e. Printing & Publishing, Watch & Clock, Hairdressing, Property Management, Information Communication and Technology, and Jewelry). These SCSs will help provide a solid basis for curriculum design of training courses for the industries concerned. We have so far adopted SCSs for courses offered under the Skill Upgrading Scheme for three industries (i.e. Printing & Publishing, Watch & Clock, and Hairdressing). About 4 500 employees have completed these courses and their feedback on the usefulness and relevancy of the courses to their work are positive. We will continue to promote the use of SCSs for course design and other training purposes.

Recognition of Prior Learning

8. To encourage and facilitate further learning of workers, we have developed a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanism to give formal recognition to the knowledge, skills and experience acquired by workers in the workplace. The Secretary for Education, after consultation with the relevant ITACs, has appointed the Vocational

¹ Printing & Publishing, Watch & Clock, Chinese Catering, Hairdressing, Property Management, Electrical & Mechanical Services, Jewelry, Beauty, Logistics, Automotives, Information Communication and Technology, and Banking

Training Council as the RPL assessment agency for three industries². On a pilot basis, we have implemented the RPL mechanism for these three industries for a period of two years with effect from June 2008. We will review the pilot exercise one year after implementation.

QF Support Schemes

9. To support the implementation of QF, the Legislative Council Finance Committee has approved the provision of a total of \$208 million for launching a number of financial assistance schemes. These support schemes include accreditation grants for providers, subsidies for registration of qualifications on the QR, accreditation and start up grants for RPL assessment agencies, and reimbursement of RPL assessment fees to employees.

Way Forward

10. Members are requested to note the latest position regarding the development and implementation of QF. We will further report progress to the Manpower Panel in due course.

Education Bureau

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² Watch & Clock, Hairdressing, and Printing & Publishing.