

## **AQRF Referencing Report of the Philippines – Criterion 2. Responsibilities and Legal Basis of All Relevant National Bodies**

The ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) functions as a device to enable comparisons of qualifications across ASEAN Member States (AMS). It addresses education and training sectors and the wider objective of promoting lifelong learning.

The referencing process is an autonomous national process where the relevant national stakeholders and authorities agree on a link between each national qualifications level and a level in the AQRF. This link between the national qualifications level and the AQRF level is outcome of the referencing process and enables further linkage, through the AQRF, to the qualifications levels in other AMS. For example, it will be possible to see all the national levels that relate to a specific AQRF level and this will enable comparisons of the qualifications from different countries that all link to the same AQRF level. Specifically, the referencing process is expected to include consulting stakeholders on the proposed links between NQF levels and AQRF levels in each AMS, reporting national referencing outcomes to the proposed AQRF Committee, engaging in peer review with the Committee and finally reporting a single official linkage of an AMS's NQF with the AQRF.

To ensure that the potentially complex process and technical work with a significant sociopolitical dimension is carried out effectively, transparently and in a way that is consistent and coherent across the ASEAN Community, the AQRF includes eleven criteria that have been agreed to promote a common process.

Criterion 2 requires that responsibilities and legal basis of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process are clearly determined and published by the main public authority responsible for the referencing process. The purpose of this criterion is to show the breadth of (official) support for the outcome of the referencing process and the report itself. The following is the Philippine Report for Criterion 2.

### **The Relevant National Bodies**

Republic Act No. 10968 also known as the PQF Act along with the other laws and issuances pertinent to the implementation of the PQF (**Annex G**) provide for the *Institutionalization of the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF)*. *Sec. 5 of the said law* created the PQF National Coordinating Council (NCC) with the principal objective of harmonizing and promoting a seamless education and training system. It has the following powers and functions:

1. To harmonize qualification levels across basic, technical-vocational and higher education;

2. To align education standards and learning outcomes with the level descriptors contained in the PQF;
3. To promote the PQF and its elements, including the principles, key features, definitions and terminologies, structures and governance arrangements, and provide information and guidelines in the implementation of the PQF;
4. To rationalize the quality assurance mechanisms in Philippine education;
5. To develop and rationalize pathways and equivalencies;
6. To maintain the national registry of qualifications;
7. To ensure the international alignment of the PQF with the qualification framework of other countries or regions;
8. To create technical working groups in support of the development and implementation of the PQF;
9. To represent the country in international fora or negotiations in line with qualifications agreements and arrangements;
10. To review and update the PQF
11. To submit to the Office of the President, the Senate and the House of Representatives an updated report of the progress and accomplishments in relation to the PQF; and
12. To perform such other functions that may be related to the implementation of the PQF.

The above powers and functions make the PQF-NCC the main public authority responsible for the referencing process.

The PQF-NCC has the following composition:

**Chairperson:** Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd)

**Members:**

- Director General Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA);
- Chairperson, Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- Secretary, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE); and
- Chairperson Professional Regulations Commission (PRC)
- Representative of the Economic sector
- Representative of the Industry sector

The National AQRF Committee has the following functions:

1. Considers information and issues from the AQRF Committee and is the single source of national information;
2. Represents the main stakeholders in qualifications in the country;
3. *Responsible for the Referencing report but may not be directly engaged in writing the report* or conducting the referencing process;
4. Considers the design of a referencing process that will inspire trust in the qualifications and qualifications framework in the country;

5. Considers the results of a national consultation on the provisional linkage and amend the proposal if necessary;
6. Endorses a draft referencing report so that it may be submitted to the AQRF Advisory Committee;
7. Considers the discussions of the report at the AQRF Advisory Committee and to agree to any amendments.

The National Referencing Committee, on the other hand, is responsible for drafting the referencing report under the overall framework and line of direction defined by NCC.

Specifically, the NRC shall be responsible for:

1. Defining the content of the referencing report as well as the documentation requirements for the referencing of the PQF to the AQRF;
2. Ensuring that a transparent methodology is used in the report preparation process, and that decisions made as part of that work are documented;
3. Preparing the referencing report and recommending to the NAC the reference between the levels in the PQF and the AQRF based on the documentation and analysis

In order to pursue the implementation of the PQF, working groups have been established, as provided for by law, in the areas of qualifications register, quality assurance, pathways and equivalencies, information and guidelines, and international alignment. Each is led by a specific NCC-member agency.

A precursor to the PQF Act is Republic Act 10647, the Ladderized Education Act of 2014, which practically provides for the same composition of the PQF National Coordinating Committee (PQF-NCC). The Ladderization of Education Act has since been basically superseded by the PQF Act but it retains some provisions that are relevant to the implementation of the PQF as identified in the latter portions of this report.

### **Functions carried out that are relevant to referencing**

By virtue of [R.A 10968](#), the PQF-NCC's institutional members are the national bodies that are legally mandated to carry out the referencing process.

The basic document entitled "ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework," that the ASEAN Economic Ministers endorsed in August 2014; the ASEAN Education Ministers in September 2014; and the ASEAN Labor Ministers through Ad-referendum from November 2014 to May 2015, states that:

*“Bodies with these types of functions (below) are generally considered as having such legitimate role (in the referencing process):*

1. Those responsible for governing the processes through which nationally recognized qualifications are designed and awarded;
2. Those bodies that support the labor market relevance of education and training;
3. Those in charge of quality assurance in relation to design and award of nationally recognized qualifications;
4. Those managing and maintaining a qualifications framework (if in existence);
5. Those responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications and providing information on national qualifications; and
6. Representatives of institutions awarding qualifications; and
7. Representatives of those using qualifications (employers, learners).

Each of the members of the NCC perform some, if not all, of functions 1 to 5. TESDA and PRC also directly award qualifications (function 6).

Table 1 shows which of the five functions are performed by each of the PQF-NCC members. It indicates the pertinent laws and government executive issuances that form the basis of the performance of the functions. The Table also shows two non-NCC member agencies that also have a mandate to perform functions 1 to 5. These are the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) and the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA). List of all relevant laws and issuances are in **Annex E**.

Functions 6 and 7 are further discussed after the presentation of the Table 1.

**Table 1. Legal Basis of Mandate/Issuances to Implement the Mandate by Function and Agency**

<b>LEGAL BASIS FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE REFERENCING PROCESS</b>					
<b>GOVERNMENT AGENCY</b>	<b>FUNCTION</b>				
	<b>1 Governing the processes through which nationally recognized qualifications are designed and awarded</b>	<b>2 Support the labor market relevance of education and training</b>	<b>3 Implement quality assurance in relation to design and award of qualifications in the NQF</b>	<b>4 Manage and maintain a qualifications framework</b>	<b>5 Have responsibility for the recognition of foreign qualifications and providing information on qualifications in the NQF</b>
<b>Department of Education (DepEd)</b>	RA 10533: Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013; RA 10968: PQF Act	RA 10968: PQF Act	R.A. 10968: PQF Act	RA 10647 (Ladderized Education Act of 2014) ; RA 10968: PQF Act	RA 10968: PQF Act
<b>Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)</b>	RA 7796: TESDA Act of 1994; R.A. 10968: PQF Act ; TESDA Board Resolution 2004-13 Training Regulations Framework as amended by Resolution 2014-04.	RA 7796: TESDA Act of 1994; R.A. 10968: PQF Act	RA 7796: TESDA Act of 1994; ·TESDA Board Resolution 2004-13 Training Regulations Framework as amended by Resolution 2014-04.;·TESDA Circular Implementing Guidelines for the STAR Rating System of TVET Programs	RA10647: Ladderized Education Act of 2014; R.A. 10968: PQF Act; RA 7796 : TESDA Act of 1994; ·TESDA Board Resolution 98-01 "Installing a Quality Assured Technical Education and skills Development (TESD); ·TESDA Circular Guidelines on Assessment and Certification under the Philippine TVET Competency Assessment and Certification System (PTCACS)·TESDA Circular Amended Omnibus Guidelines on Program Registration under the Unified TVET Program Registration and Accreditation System (UTPRAS)·TESDA Board Resolution 2004-13 Training Regulations Framework as amended by Resolution 2014-04 System	RA 7796: The TESDA Act of 1994

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<b>Commission on Higher Education (CHED)</b>	RA 7722: Higher Education Act of 1994 ; CHED Administrative Order (CAO) 1 series of 2012	RA 7722: Higher Education Act of 1994	RA 7722: Higher Education Act of 1994 ; CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) 46 series of 2012: A Typology- and Outcomes-Based Quality Assurance System	RA 10647: Ladderized Education Act of 2014; R.A. 10968: PQF Act of 2017; RA 7722 Higher Education Act of 1994	CHED International Affairs Services; RA 10968: PQF Act ;
<b>Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)</b>	RA 7796: TESDA Act of 1994	RA 10968: PQF Act	P.D 422 Labor Code of the Philippines: On DOLE Function; R.A. 10968: PQF Act	RA 10647: Ladderized Education Act of 2014;R.A. 10968: PQF Act	RA 8981: PRC Modernization Act of 2000
<b>Professional Regulations Commission (PRC)</b>	RA 8981: PRC Modernization Act of 2000; RA 10912: Continuing Professional Development Act of 2016	RA 10968: PQF Act	RA 8981: PRC Modernization Act of 2000; RA 10912: Continuing Professional Development Act of 2016; CHED-PRC MOA on M&E (Nov 4, 2008)	R.A. 10968: PQF Act:	RA 8981: PRC Modernization Act of 2000; RA 10968: PQF Act ;
<b>Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP)</b>	RA 9497: Civil Aviation Authority Act of 2008 Chapter VII Sec. 35h	RA 9497 Chapter VI Sec 34	RA 9497 - Sec 40 and 67;	R.A. 10968: PQF Act	RA 9497: Civil Aviation Authority Act of 2008 Chapter VII Sec. 35J

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<b>Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA)</b>	RA 10635: MARINA STCW Administration Act of 2014.	RA 10635: MARINA STCW Administration Act of 2014.; Presidential Decree Blg. 474: Maritime Industry Decree of 1974, Section 13. "Maritime Industry Manpower Needs"	RA 10635 Sec. 6.6.6.1 Quality Management Division; MARINA Circ. 2013-01 Series of 2012- Rules on the Inspection and Accreditation of Maritime Training Courses; STCW Circular 2018-02; CMO no. 67 s. 2017- for 1st yr level; CMO no. 20 s. 2015; CMO 70; STCW Circular no. 2017-03; STCW Circular no. 2017-04 -; STCW Circular No. 2017- 05; STCW Circular no. 2017-07; STCW Circ. No. 2014-08; STCW Circ. No. 2014-09; STCW Circ. No. 2014-10; STCW Circ. No. 2014-11; STCW Circ. No. 2014-12; STCW Circ. No. 2014-13; STCW Circ. No. 2016-13	STCW Circular 2018-02; R.A. 10968: PQF Act; Approved Training Programs (ATPs) and assessment of seafarer's competence carried out by MHEIS, MTIs, PACs And MACs.(for MTIs and PACs and MACs); Joint CHED-MARINA 01 Memorandum Circular No. 1, Guidelines on Joint CHED-MARINA Monitoring of Maritime Education Programs	RA 10635: "An Act Establishing The Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) <u>As The Single Maritime Administration Responsible For The Implementation And Enforcement Of The 1978 International Convention On Standards Of Training, Certification And Watchkeeping For Seafarers, As Amended, And International Agreements Or Covenants Related Thereto</u> " ; STCW Circular 2018-02

## Letting the public know

After their enactment, laws in the Philippines have to be published in an Official Gazette for dissemination to the public. Laws may also be searched and downloaded by typing the law title and/or number. Typing “PQF Law”, for example, leads to the following link: [www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2018/01jan/20180116-RA-10968-RRD.pdf](http://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2018/01jan/20180116-RA-10968-RRD.pdf). *The PQF-NCC as the main public authority will also be creating a website.*

## **Quality Assurance (Function 3 in Table 1 above) performed by private bodies**

In section on Referencing Criterion 6 (Quality Assurance) of this Report, it is stated that there are non-governmental bodies involved in quality assurance work (function 3 in Table 1). Historically, the Philippine QA system has evolved into one where the QA function assumed by government, as laid out in Table 1 above, is complemented by private QA agencies. The legitimacy of the roles of these private QA bodies may be found in their Articles of Incorporation and in the system where the results of their accreditation activities blend in with government policies, for example, in the award of CHED autonomous status (See **page 66** for a description of autonomous HEIs).

## **Institutions involved in awarding qualifications**

The government bodies that award qualifications are:

- TESDA through the Philippine Technical Vocational Education and Training Competency Assessment and Certification Systems (PTCACS), which is further discussed under Referencing Criterion 6; (RA 7796)
- PRC as part of its licensing function (RA 8981)
- MARINA for seafarers (RA 10635)
- CAAP for civil aviation personnel (RA 9497)

On the side of the private sector, technical vocational institutions (TVIs) and higher education institutions (HEIs) award qualifications. There are subjects in the senior high school curricula that lead to the award of National Certificates. In these cases, TESDA awards the qualification through the PTCACS.

A number of training hospitals and hotels are also involved in the award of qualifications in the medical and hospitality fields. They may be organic parts or partners of TVIs and HEIs.

All these award-giving institutions are regulated by the relevant government bodies as described in this report’s section on Referencing Criterion 6.

The Professional Regulation-Commission administers a licensure examination that confers on those who hurdle the examination the right to practice the regulated profession. In lieu of a licensure examination, the Professional Institute of Industrial



Engineers (PIIE) awards certificates to those who pass a qualifying examination for entry into the practice of industrial engineering.

Aside from the main function of awarding qualifications, the private organizations mentioned above, and their associations, are also involved in the design of qualifications (function 1 in Table 1). For example, a good number of college professors are members of CHED's Technical Panels and Technical Committees. TESDA's Board includes representatives from associations of TechVoc education and training providers.

### **Institutions involved in using qualifications**

The main users of qualifications are employers and the learners themselves. As the users they rightfully have a hand in the design of these qualifications (function 1 in Table 1). They get involved in the development of CHED prescribed minimum standards for academic degrees and in TESDA's Training Regulations development MARINA's approved training courses development.

As the provider of jobs for persons awarded the qualifications, the employers' needs define the very relevance of these qualifications (function 2 in Table 1). Rightfully as well, the process of determining which qualifications are included in the registry of qualifications and how the minimum standards and training regulations are developed, as discussed in the next section of this report, rely heavily on their inputs. They also have a big interest and involvement in assuring the quality of these qualifications (function 3 in Table 1). Two accrediting bodies led by professional societies with representatives from industry are further described in the section on Referencing Criterion 6—quality assurance—in this Report.

The employers are represented in these processes through the sectoral industry organizations, chambers of commerce and industry (local and foreign), business clubs and management associations, business associations with advocacies in education and cooperatives. Since government is a very big employer, its Civil Service Commission (CSC) should also perform functions relevant to referencing.

Learners get involved through professional societies, trade unions, seafarers' unions and other workers' organizations. The professional societies help CHED Technical Committees develop degree programs and lead two accreditation bodies as earlier mentioned.