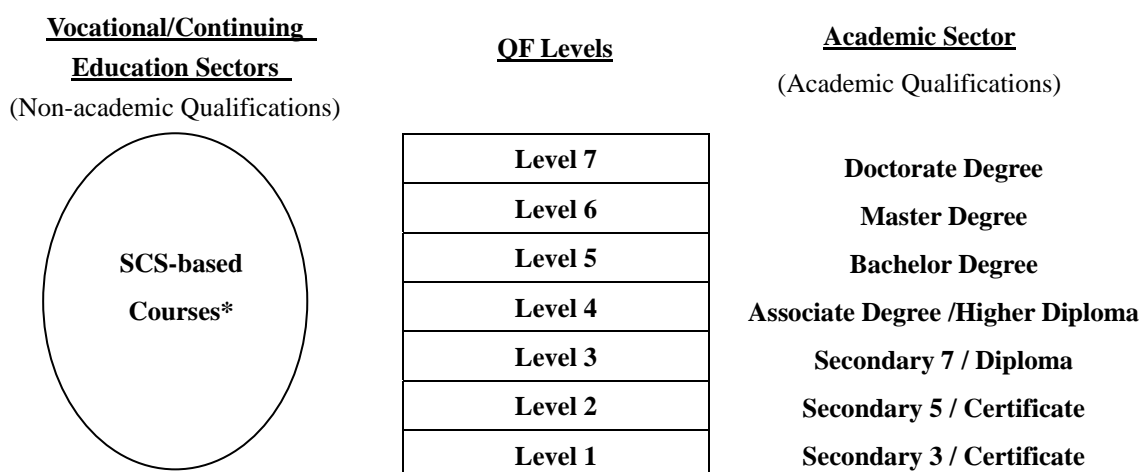# Development of Qualifications Framework
for the Logistics Industry

What is Qualifications Framework?

Qualifications Framework (QF) is a 7-level hierarchy to order qualifications covering the academic, vocational and continuing education sectors through an associated quality assurance mechanism. The hierarchy starts from the lowest Level 1 to the highest Level 7.   The primary objective of QF is to build up a platform for bringing forth coherence amongst qualifications, education, training and experience with a view to fostering life-long learning.

Vocational/Continuing Education Sectors (Non-academic Qualifications)	QF Levels	Academic Sector (Academic Qualifications)
	Level 7	Doctorate Degree
	Level 6	Master Degree
SCS-based Courses*	Level 5	Bachelor Degree
	Level 4	Associate Degree /Higher Diploma
	Level 3	Secondary 7 / Diploma
	Level 2	Secondary 5 / Certificate
	Level 1	Secondary 3 / Certificate

* SCS-based courses: educational or training courses or programmes that adopt the Specifications of Competency Standards (SCS)

Why is QF needed in the Logistics Industry?

The logistics Industry is one of the four pillar industries in Hong Kong, with a total workforce of over 200,000 covering sea-air-land transportation of cargoes. Currently the Logistics Industry is undergoing tremendous day-to-day transformation with rapid technologization and automation, and at the same time is facing increasingly fierce competition from neighboring and worldwide regions. So when the proposal of launching QF in Logistics Industry was sounded out in 2006, it was widely supported by employers, employees, trade associations and professional bodies.

QF was officially launched in Hong Kong on 5 May 2008 in tandem with the commencement of operation of the *Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance*.   The said Ordinance laid down the legal basis for QF as

well as its associated quality assurance mechanism and has empowered the Hong Kong Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) as the Accreditation Authority to uphold the quality assurance role underpinning QF. For the vocational sector, QF is implemented through an industry-led forum, collectively termed the Industry Training Advisory Committee (ITAC) comprising industry representatives of major stakeholders, while the Education Bureau provides the secretariat services and funding support. So far, a total of 12 industries have been formed to take forward the QF implementation. Logistics Industry is the eleventh industry to join QF in 2006.

QF Development in Logistics Industry: Milestones and Achievements

The Logistics ITAC, in its second term of office, comprises 32 members, including employers, employees, and representatives from trade associations and professional bodies. Over the past two and half years, the ITAC has steered the development of competency standards, as a starting point, in respect of two branches of the Logistics Industry, namely *Airfreight and Express*, as well as *Shipping*. The rest of the three branches, including *Local Transport and Distribution*, *Terminals and Warehouse*, and *Supporting and Ancillary Services*, will be dealt with in the later stages. These competency standards (generally referred as SCS [Specification of Competency Standards]) have to undergo industry-wide consultations before adoption for use by the industry. After extensive consultation and necessary revision, the SCS will form very good reference for curriculum design by various educational and training providers, and for human resources development of employers.

Educational and training courses and programmes developed by reference to the SCS for the Logistics Industry and designed in accordance with the Qualifications Guidelines issued by the Education Bureau will be labeled as "SCS-based" on the Qualifications Register (QR) if they have gone through successful accreditation. As the SCS contains the competency standards required by the industry, these SCS-based courses will equip trainees with the necessary competency requirements to perform the concerned job functions.

In order to promote QF and the SCS-based courses, the Education Bureau has also introduced the Qualifications Framework Support Scheme (QFSS) to facilitate participation. The QFSS mainly covers accreditation grants to eligible training bodies, fee reimbursement to successful applicants of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanism if the applicants have later completed a

QF-recognised course, and also subsidies for eligible providers in uploading their quality-assured programmes onto the QR. In addition, SCS-based courses are eligible for registration under the Continuing Education Fund (CEF) course list so that learners have the incentive to pursue such courses by applying for fee reimbursement (up to 80% of fees per course or up to a maximum of HK$10,000 per learner).

QR is indeed the public face of QF. It is a comprehensive online database containing essential information of learning programmes which have already been quality-assured and successfully accredited. QR offers free access to such qualifications and courses for the general public. With the establishment of the QR, learners and workers can make informed choices in choosing programmes for further studies, whilst employers can check the relevancy of the potential employees' qualifications and awards.

Tasks Ahead

Thanks to the unstinting support of the ITAC members and related stakeholders, QF development in the Logistics Industry has progressed well as planned. We are grateful that the HAFFA is going to pioneer the development of SCS-based courses by converting some of its existing training courses into SCS-based in order to support QF implementation.

Looking ahead, the Logistics ITAC will in coming two years undertake the following tasks: (a) to further publicize the QF development and accomplishments to the stakeholders of the industry; (b) to conduct industry-wide consultation on the two branches of competency standards already drafted; (c) to study the training needs of the industry and to promote the adoption of the competency standards for training and HR purposes; (d) to encourage the design and launch of SCS-based courses at different QF levels, and to encourage the training providers to provide progression pathways; (e) to formulate the appropriate RPL mechanism for the industry; (f) to prepare for the drafting of the competency standards of the remaining three branches.

The Logistics ITAC appeals to the members of the industry to render support and assistance to the above-mentioned tasks. Interested individuals can obtain more information in the HKQF website at http://www.hkqf.gov.hk

(Ir Dr David Ho, Chairman of Logistics Industry Training Advisory Committee, Education Bureau)