MALAYSIA[1]

Overview

The Malaysian education system encompasses education beginning from pre-school through university. Pre-tertiary education (pre-school to secondary education) is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education (MOE) while tertiary or higher education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). The Department of Skills Development, of the Ministry of Human Resources is responsible for the Skills sector. The Government's vision is to make Malaysia a centre of educational excellence.

The legislative base for tertiary education (higher education, TVET and the Skills sectors) is:

1. Universities and University Colleges Act 1971

2. The Private Higher Educational Institution Act 1996 (PHEI Act 1996)

3. Education Act 550 1996

4. National Skills Development Act 2006 (NASDA Act 2006)

5. Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007

National Qualifications Framework

MQF was officially published in 2007. The MQF is an instrument that develops and classifies qualifications based on set criteria. The MQF integrates with and links all national qualifications. MQF covers all sectors i.e. skills, technical/vocational and academic sectors. The MQF enables individuals to progress in higher education through transfer of credits and recognition of prior learning, acquired from formal, non-formal and informal learning. Key characteristics of the MQF are:

*   An 8-level framework, with each level having 8 learning outcome domains
*   A credit point system that measures the volume of learning or academic load to attain the set learning outcomes. Student Learning Time (SLT) is included in the calculation of credit and academic load[2].
*   A Program Profile for disciplines and qualifications.

The qualifications are based on learning outcomes and there are generic outcomes for every qualification.

Quality documents have been developed and are comprised of rules and regulations that HEPs must follow. The documents are:

---

[1] This overview is based on the Malaysia Report on Standards and Qualifications (2015) prepared by a team of Malaysian experts with support from the World Bank. The Report and its overview expand on the original submission by Malaysia for the East Asia Summit Vocational Education and Training Quality Assurance Framework Project managed by Australia Commonwealth Government in 2012.

[2] 40 hours of notional student learning time is valued as one credit.

1. Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF)
2. Code of Practice for Program Accreditation (COPPA)
3. Code of Practice for Institutional Audit (COPIA)
4. Programme Standards (PS)
5. Guidelines to Good Practices (GGP)
6. National Occupational Skill Standard (NOSS)
7. Code of Practice for Skills Programme Accreditation

Quality Assurance Mechanisms

Accreditation of Qualifications

For TVET & Higher Education qualifications, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) is the only accrediting body as stated in the MQA Act of 2007. Programmes of studies that are accredited by MQA will be registered in the Malaysian Qualification Register (MQR).

There are professional bodies that recognise their own specific fields, such as the Engineering Accreditation Council (EAC) and the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC).

For Skills qualifications, the Department of Skills Development, Ministry of Human Resource (DSD, MOHR) accredits programmes. The accreditation process for skills programmes are based on NASDA Act 2006. The DSD, MOHR uses National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS) to accredit programmes. At the moment there are no specific National TVET qualifications, however qualifications are guided by National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS).

Monitoring of quality and currency of qualifications includes:

- For technical and vocational programmes conducted by Polytechnics and Community Colleges will be monitored by MQA through maintenance audit once every five years.
- For skills programmes, the DSD MOHR audits and award star ratings once every two years.

Assessment

Higher education and technical and vocational providers are the awarding bodies. For skills programmes based on NOSS standards, the Department of Skills Development, Ministry of Human Resources is the main awarding body. Assessments are undertaken by individual providers.

For programmes accredited through MQA, assessments are internally developed and subject to COPPA and to some extent COPIA, which requires student assessment processes to have external scrutiny (enhanced standard).

For those programmes accredited through DSD, MOHR there are assessment test banks which providers must use (this initiative is still in progress and assessment banks do not address all industry sectors of the NOSS). Portfolio or practical assessments are developed by the individual providers. NOSS qualifications are subject to internal and external verification processes.

To ensure consistency of assessor judgements in relation to student assessment:

- For technical and vocational programmes and skills programmes, the quality and currency of qualifications are monitored through accreditation, maintenance audit, Institutional Audit, ratings and continuous quality improvement.
- For MQA accredited programmes, the evaluations undertaken by the panel of assessors are based on quality assurance documents and MQA established Accreditation Committees to ensure consistent judgement. These committees are comprised of subject experts from various fields.

Relationship to standards

Standards are used for programme development for the higher education, technical and vocational education and skills education sectors.

Higher education and technical vocational education programmes

For higher education and technical vocational education programmes approved by the MQA, educational standards are developed (referred to as programme standards) to inform curriculum, training, and assessment materials development.

These standards have undergone a number of iterations and provide guidelines for different modes of study, including coursework, research and a combination of both. They outline subjects (body of knowledge) and key topics, credits allocated to each subject as well as formative and summative assessment information. The standards also outline student entry requirements and benchmarks for academic staff, including qualifications and experience, ratio of part time to full time staff and the staff–student ratio.

Programme standards cover the following areas: accounting, building, surveying, computing, multi media, hospitality and tourism, law and Syariah, Islamic studies, Muamalat and Islamic Finance, psychology, traditional and complementary medicine, performing arts, medical and health sciences, media and communications, engineering and engineering technology, education, early child education, and information technology.

These standards are used by prospective providers for curriculum development and program design, along with approval to deliver the curriculum for purposes of accreditation.

Generic or employability skills are addressed through the MQF. All programmes approved through the MQA must meet these requirements. The MQF is based on eight domains:
- Knowledge
- Practical skills
- Social skills and responsibilities
- Values, attitude and professionalism
- Communication, leadership and team skills
- Problem solving and scientific skills
- Information management and lifelong learning skills
- Managerial and entrepreneurial skills.

Programmes standards do not specify separate generic or employability skills, but are more specific to the skills required for each occupation area. It is through demonstrating these domains at the various levels

of the MQF that curriculum addresses generic or employability skills contextualized to discipline requirements.

Assessment of student performance is subject to the quality assurance as set out in COPPA and contextualized by discipline through the Programme Standards at programme level by COPIA when checking the policies and systems on student assessment at the institutional level. External examiners are mandatory for programmes at the bachelor and above levels.

Programme standards are developed through a panel convened by the MQA. Panel members include MOHE, higher education providers (both private and public) and related industry or government agencies. Programme standards are informed by existing program design, provider educational standards, and industry needs - as described by representatives - plus any professional bodies, or licensing and/or regulatory requirements. In turn, the programme standards inform providers' future program design, educational standards, and curriculum for accreditation purposes. All curriculum is provider-developed and owned.

Programme standards are all available on the MQA website.

Engineering programmes at the degree level for engineering technologist and engineering technology are recognized by the Washington Accord.

Skills programmes

For skills programmes approved by DSD, MOHR, the development of 'occupational skills standards' are developed at a national level. The National Occupational Skills Standards are the 'minimum specification of performance that an individual must achieve competency in when carrying out a function in the workplace, together with the knowledge and skill set needed to meet standard requirements' (NOSS Guideline, Department of Skills Development (DSD) Ministry of Human Resources, 2013).

The competencies are based on the ILO definition of skills, which means an acquired and practiced ability to competently carry out a task or job. The competencies describe broad occupation competencies rather than specific tasks.

NOSS are developed through a DACUM process based on occupational and job task analysis. NOSS can be developed by staff within the DSD or by external consultants, however the development processes require a committee panel consisting of 'industrial practitioners representing the major players in the respective industry, relevant authorities and professional bodies in the development of the Standard Practice (SP) and Standard Content (SC)'. The development of the Curriculum of Competency Unit (CoCU) should also include additional panel members who are involved in the training line of the respective industry.

NOSS address the 30 different industry sectors, including transportation, printing, chemical, tourism and hospitality, information communications and technology (ICT), machinery and equipment, mechanical and electrical service maintenance, building and construction, business management, textiles and apparels, agriculture and agro-based, biotechnology, oil and gas, as well as distributive trades. The Skills sector has a 5-tier qualification system (Skills certificate level 1-3; skills diploma level 4; skills advanced diploma) that is consistent with the NQF.

NOSS consists of:
- A standard practice section, which provides an overview of occupational background
  - Occupational Structure table that shows the career pathway for a particular occupation derived from Occupational Analysis (OA) process and occupational structure table

- o   Qualifications available
- o   Other information including: working conditions
- Standard content
  - o   Competency profile chart
  - o   Competency profiles, including work activities (job tasks) and performance criteria
  - o   Curriculum of competencies unit (COCU)

The competency profiles are the competency specifications supported by the COCU, which includes required knowledge and skills, training hours, delivery mode and assessment criteria.

Originally NOSS specified only specific skills and did not address generic or employability skills. Due to the need to meet the requirements of the MQF, generic competencies are being added to profiles. NOSS qualifications now incorporate Core competencies plus Core Abilities and Electives. Core Abilities are generic abilities, including ICT, communication skills, numeracy, teamwork, problem-solving; they are described separately from vocational skills competencies.

NOSS standards all follow a set format, guided by the information in the 2013 NOSS Guideline. NOSS standards are all available from the DSD at a small cost. There is no public register per se. Standards are reviewed on a regular basis, 3- 5 years or earlier if required.

The NOSS standards inform employers, trainers and students. They inform the program and learning design and curriculum, along with the training and assessment materials developed by the provider for approval purposes.

Registration of Training Providers/Awarding Bodies

The registration of higher education providers and technical and vocational providers is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, whilst the registration of skills providers is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Human Resources. Both ministries have developed their own standards and requirements for registration of TVET/Skills Programmes Providers.

For skills providers, DSD approves providers to deliver programmes against the NOSS. Providers need to meet a series of standards for approval, which are similar to MQA standards. Curriculum, learning materials, and assessment all need to be approved by DSD. The Curriculum of Competency Unit provides guidance for program and learning material design. Providers receive a template for learning guides.

Monitoring strategies are employed by both ministries and TVET provider outcomes are reported through programme accreditation reports and maintenance audit reports.

There is a register for higher education and TVET and for Skills providers maintained by the Ministry of Education and the DSD, Ministry of Human Resources.

Educator/Assessor Requirements

There are minimum requirements for teachers stated in the MQA quality assurance documents. In general, teachers' qualifications should be at least one level higher than the program that he/she intends to teach (although experience is not mandatory and therefore does not matter). These requirements are used as a guide by the panel of assessors/experts. The Ministry of Education is responsible for assessing

and registering teachers' qualifications for public and private HE providers. This is for the purpose of issuing a teaching permit.

According to DSD, MOHR quality assurance documents, teachers should have qualifications appropriate to the program that they intend to teach. The DSD requires assessors to have at least a Malaysian Skills Certificate one level higher than that for which they are assessing and the Vocational Training Officer qualification (which is a 3-month program with a 6-month internship). Trainers and assessors have different standards, with the trainer standards being less stringent.

Transnational/Cross Border Education

MOE and MOHR are responsible for policy matters, including allowing providers to deliver in other nations. Incoming providers need to undergo the same registration process as local providers and the same set of standards apply. MQA also conducts assessments to determine the relative equivalency of programs and qualifications from abroad for the purpose of continuing studies in Malaysia.

Quality Indicators/Data

Data is collected by the MQA, MOE and DSD, MOHR.

Additional information

Information for this summary was provided by the following representatives.

Name	Role	Organisation
Zita Mohd Fahmi		Malaysian Qualifications Authority
Datuk Dr Pang Chau Leong	Director-General, Department of Skills Development,	Ministry of Human Resources, Malaysia