

Qualifications Guidelines for Specification of Competency Standards-based, Specification of Generic Competencies-based and Vocational Qualifications Pathway Courses under Qualifications Framework

Introduction

This set of Qualifications Guidelines provides information on the conditions for courses to be designated as Specification of Competency Standards¹ (SCS)-based, Specification of Generic Competencies² (SGC)-based and Vocational Qualifications Pathway³ (VQP) courses (hereafter referred to as SCS-based, SGC-based and VQP courses)⁴.

Qualifications Guidelines

2. SCS-based courses are courses designed by education and training providers using the SCS developed by the Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) under the Qualifications Framework (QF). The learning content of these courses is primarily based on the SCS, and the learning outcomes are aligned with the performance requirements and outcome standards as set out in the SCS. Its key features are as follows:

¹ SCS sets out the skills, knowledge and competency standards required of the practitioners to perform various job functions of an industry. The competency standards are presented as Units of Competency (UoCs) in the SCS, detailing the QF Level, Credit, Competency, Range of Application and Assessment Criteria, among others.

² Formerly known as the Specification of Generic (Foundation) Competencies. SGC refers to generic skills and knowledge that are applicable across industries and relevant to most members of the workforce. It covers five strands of generic skills: Communication Skills, English, Chinese (including Cantonese and Putonghua), Information Technology and Numeracy.

³ VQP is developed by the respective ITACs or other authorities composed of major industry stakeholders.

⁴ Information on the SCSs, SGCs and VQP is uploaded to the QF website (www.hkqf.gov.hk).

- (a) the curriculum emphasizes the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills required in the workplace, with such knowledge and skills aligned with the SCS of the industry;
- (b) the learning content is based on SCS, and its structure and organisation are aligned with the job skills of the industry;
- (c) teaching and learning activities are conducted in actual or simulated work environments; and
- (d) the assessment focuses on measuring the competency level attained by the learners to ensure that they meet the performance requirements and outcome standards set out in the relevant Units of Competency (UoCs) of the SCS.

3. SGC-based courses are courses designed by education and training providers using the SGC developed by the Education Bureau (EDB). The learning content of these courses is primarily based on the SGC, and the learning outcomes are aligned with the performance requirements and outcome standards as set out in the SGC.

4. VQP courses are courses designed by education and training providers to meet the competency requirements of a specified job role under a VQP developed by an ITAC or other authorities composed of major industry stakeholders⁵. Relevant UoCs are selected and mapped from the SCS to form a VQP qualification. The learning outcomes of the course shall be fully aligned with the competency requirements of the specified job role, thereby facilitating effective articulation between learning and employment.

⁵ “Guidelines on Development of Vocational Qualifications Pathways under Hong Kong Qualifications Framework” is available on the QF website (<https://hkqf.gov.hk/vqp>).

Guideline 1 : Curriculum Design

5. For SCS-based courses, the majority of the learning content (i.e. 60% of total QF credits or 72 QF credits, whichever is the lower) shall be drawn from the SCS. Education and training providers may also adopt the SGC to meet the above percentage requirement. However, the proportion derived from the SGC shall not exceed 10% of the total credits of the course or 12 QF credits, whichever is the lower.

6. For SGC-based courses, the majority of the learning content (i.e. 60% of total QF credits or 72 QF credits, whichever is the lower) shall be drawn from the SGC.

7. For VQP courses, the learning contents shall cover the competency requirements of a specified job role and comprise relevant UoCs mapped from the SCS. The learning outcomes shall be aligned with the competency requirements of the specified job role and the competency standards specified in the relevant UoCs. A VQP course meeting these requirements may also be designated as an SCS-based course.

Guideline 2 : Award Titles

8. In addition, EDB announced in October 2012 the implementation of the Award Titles Scheme (ATS) and Use of Credit under QF. Currently, all courses at QF Levels 1 to 7 (including SCS-based, SGC-based and VQP courses) should conform to the ATS before they can be registered in the Qualifications Register (QR) (www.hkqr.gov.hk). The details of the ATS are below:

QF Level	Award Titles Permitted for Each Level						
7	Doctor 博士						
6	Master 碩士	Postgraduate Diploma 深造文憑 Postgraduate Certificate 深造證書	Professional Diploma 專業文憑	Advanced Diploma 高等文憑	Diploma 文憑	Certificate 證書	
5	Bachelor 學士		Professional Certificate 專業證書	Advanced Certificate 高等證書			
4	Associate 副學士	Higher Diploma 高級文憑 Higher Certificate 高級證書					
3							
2							
1							
							Foundation Certificate 基礎證書

Guideline 3 : QF Credit

9. All Diploma courses, with or without qualifier, must consist of 60 QF credits or more. Certificate course, with or without qualifier, are not subject to any QF Credit requirement. In addition, for programmes at any QF level, the learning content and outcomes (in terms of credit) at the exit level of the qualification shall constitute the majority of the total credits of the programme. The above requirements also apply to SCS-based, SGC-based and VQP courses.

10. Starting from 1 September 2022, all programmes at QF Levels 1 to 7 (except for research-based programmes) have to indicate the QF credits on the QR to reflect the volume of learning required for attaining the qualification.

Accreditation

11. In order to be designated as SCS-based, SGC-based and/or VQP courses, they must satisfy the above three conditions under this Qualifications Guidelines, and have successfully undergone the accreditation process of the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (except for courses offered by the self-accrediting institutions), which will cover the admission requirements, the curriculum content, the instructional methodologies, the assessment criteria, the exit standard, among others.

12. All SCS-based, SGC-based and/or VQP courses will be listed on the QR with corresponding labels for public identification and reference.

Programme Development Grant for SCS-based, SGC-based and VQP Courses

13. Education and training providers may apply for the Programme Development Grant available under the Designated Support Schemes of the QF Fund if they develop and offer accredited SCS-based, SGC-based or VQP courses. For details, please visit the QF website (<https://www.hkqf.gov.hk/dss>).