

## Qualifications Framework

### Award Titles Scheme

#### Introduction

1. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has launched the Qualifications Framework (QF) since 2008 to provide a platform to support lifelong learning with a view to enhancing the capability and competitiveness of the workforce. Qualifications recognised under QF are characterised by three key features: **level** which reflects the depth and complexity of learning leading to the qualification; **award title** which reflects the nature, area of study and hierarchy of the qualification; and **credit** which indicates the volume or size of learning leading to the qualification.
2. The Award Titles Scheme (ATS) is introduced with the aim of standardising and simplifying the use of titles for qualifications recognised under QF. This document should be read together with the Operational Guidelines on Use of Credit and Implementation Timetable.

#### Award Titles Scheme

3. ATS is shown in the diagram below. ATS lists the award titles which are permitted to be used by providers for qualifications they offer under QF and the associated learning programmes. ATS covers qualifications at all QF levels (i.e. Levels 1 to 7) in the academic, vocational and continuing education sectors.

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  Professional Certificate 專業證書	Advanced Diploma 高等文憑  Advanced Certificate 高等證書	Diploma 文憑	Certificate 證書	
5	Bachelor 學士						
4	Associate 副學士	Higher Diploma 高級文憑  Higher Certificate 高級證書					
3							
2					Foundation Certificate 基礎證書		
1							

## Explanations

### *Certificate and Diploma*

4. Certificate may be used for qualifications at QF Levels 1 to 6. Qualifications at Levels 1 and 2 may also use Foundation Certificate as the title of the award. Diploma can only be used for qualifications at QF Levels 3 to 6.
5. A Diploma must carry a learning size of 60 QF credits<sup>1</sup> or more. There is no minimum credit requirement for a Certificate programme.

### *Use of qualifiers*

6. Qualifiers which may be used by providers for their qualifications at different levels are specified in ATS (i.e. Foundation, Higher, Advanced, Professional, and Postgraduate). No qualifier is allowed for qualifications at QF Level 3 (i.e. Certificate and Diploma).
7. Providers, if they so wish, may add “QF Level” as part of the titles for their qualifications to suit their needs. The incorporation of “QF Level” to award titles is entirely voluntary. An example of an award title with “QF Level” is shown below:

Professional Diploma in Business Management (QF Level 6)  
商業管理專業文憑(資歷架構第 6 級) or (資歷架構級別六)

### *Degree/sub-degree programmes*

8. Providers may continue to adopt titles traditionally used for degree and sub-degree qualifications in the mainstream education (i.e. Associate at Level 4, Bachelor at Level 5, Master at Level 6, and Doctor at Level 7).
9. The following qualifications currently offered by the university sector are recognised globally. These award titles will continue to be recognised under QF although they do not conform to ATS:
  - Juris Doctor (JD) at QF Level 6

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<sup>1</sup> One QF credit consists of 10 notional learning hours, which takes into account the total time likely to be required by an average learner in all modes of learning, including attendance in classes, self-study, on-line learning, practical learning, examination, etc.

- Doctor of Jurisprudence (Dr. Jur.) at QF Level 6
- Executive Master of XXXX (e.g. EMBA) at QF Level 6

### **Review Panel on Award Titles**

10. Save for the award titles mentioned under paragraph 9 above, use of award titles not specified in ATS will not be allowed for qualifications recognised under QF unless prior approval is obtained. Providers who wish to use titles for their programmes not specified in ATS may apply to the Review Panel on Award Titles (Review Panel) to be set up under the Education Bureau with effect from 1 January 2013. It should however be noted that use of titles outside ATS is not encouraged as this will be contrary to the intention and purpose of ATS. Only in very exceptional circumstances should a provider consider using titles not specified in ATS.
11. Any applications should only be submitted and will only be processed by the Review Panel after its establishment. Applications must be submitted in writing and sent to the following address:

Secretary, Review Panel on Award Titles  
Further Education Division, Education Bureau  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor, East Wing, Central Government Offices, Tamar  
Hong Kong
12. The application should be made before the programme is submitted to the relevant quality assurance body for accreditation/assessment. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide necessary information and full justifications for its application. The Review Panel will complete processing an application within four months upon receipt of the application. It is for the applicant to allow sufficient lead time and prepare for a negative outcome.

## **Implementation Plan**

13. The implementation timetable of ATS can be downloaded from QF website ([www.hkqf.gov.hk](http://www.hkqf.gov.hk)). Providers will be responsible for ensuring that the titles of their qualifications will conform to ATS in accordance with the timetable.

## **Enquiry**

14. Enquiries regarding ATS can be directed to QF Secretariat:

QF Secretariat

Tel : (852) 2836 1700

Email : [hkqf@edb.gov.hk](mailto:hkqf@edb.gov.hk)

**Education Bureau**  
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