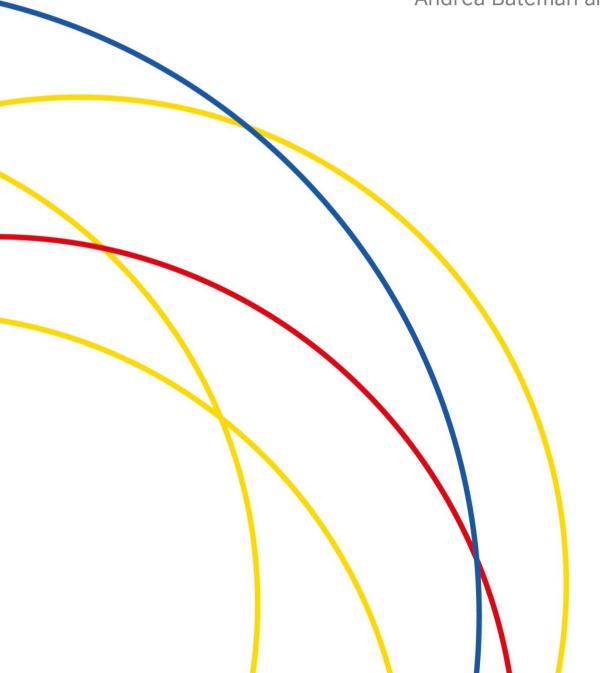# QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS RELATED TO NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS IN ASEAN AND THEIR IMPACT ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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European Union Support to Higher Education in The ASEAN Region

SHARE, the European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region, is a four-year initiative by the EU and ASEAN. They have entrusted the implementation of SHARE to a consortium of British Council (leader), Campus France, DAAD, Nuffic, ENQA and EUA. Launched in Jakarta in May 2015, SHARE aims to support ASEAN in harmonising regional higher education by sharing European expertise. It does this through strengthening regional cooperation, enhancing the quality, competitiveness and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education for institutions and students, and thereby contributing to a closer ASEAN Community in 2015 and beyond.

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Acronyms

ACC	Accreditation Committee of Cambodia
ADRI	Approach – Deployment – Results – Improvement
AMS	ASEAN Member State(s)
AQAF	ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework
AQRF	ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BAN-PT / NAAHE	Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tingi / National Accreditation Agency for Higher Education
BDNAC	Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council
BDQF	Brunei Darussalam Qualifications Framework
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CET	Continuing Education and Training
CNQF	Cambodia National Qualifications Framework
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
EAS	East Asia Summit
EQA	External Quality Assurance
EQAA	External Quality Assurance Agency
EQAC	Education Quality Assurance Centre
HEI	Higher Education Institution
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
QAF	Quality Assurance Framework
QF	Qualifications Framework
MNQF	Myanmar National Qualifications Framework
MQF	Malaysian Qualifications Framework
NAQAC	National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee, Myanmar
NEPC	National Education Policy Commission, Myanmar
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
PQF	Philippine Qualifications Framework
TPQI	Thailand Professional Qualification Institute
TQF	Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
VQF	Vietnam Qualifications Framework
WSQ	Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications

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Background

The project "European Union Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region (SHARE)" has as the global objective to strengthen regional cooperation, enhance the quality, regional competitiveness and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education institutions and students, contributing to an ASEAN Community in 2015 and beyond. At the core of this action is the aim to enhance cooperation between the EU and the ASEAN Economic Community and to create lasting benefits from the harmonisation of higher education across ASEAN.

A consortium of the British Council, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Nuffic, Campus France, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the European University Association (EUA) aim to work with ASEAN counterparts to implement the SHARE project between 2015 and 2018.

This report follows two reports previously undertaken by European Union Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region (SHARE) related to the state of play of Qualifications Frameworks (QFs) and Quality Assurance Frameworks (QAFs) specifically in relation to the impact on higher education.

This report aims to inform the consortium on the quality assurance arrangements of the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) and the interlinkages of both QFs and QAFs in ASEAN higher education sector.

The general objectives of this report were to:

- analyse and compare the QA requirements in the different NQFs;
- assess the impact of the NQFs' QA arrangements on HEIs;
- analyse the relationship between the regional frameworks in QF and QA (AQAF and AQRF), and describe the efforts already underway and future plans to link the national QA systems to ASEANs' overarching frameworks;
- provide recommendations on how to strengthen the interaction between regional initiatives in QA and QF.

With regard to the general objectives outlined above, the following questions were to be addressed and answered in the study:

- How are procedures for quality assurance incorporated in National Qualifications Frameworks in ASEAN? Describe the arrangements.
- Describe the interlinkages between NQF and QA systems in AMS in the field of higher education (i.e. governance structure and regulations). Is there an impact of the QA arrangements in NQFs on EQA regulations and procedures?
- In how far is the issue of learning outcomes reflected in the EQA systems of AMS?
- What was the role of EQA bodies in formulating the NQF and if applicable in how far have they been in charge of managing the implementation of NQFs?
- Assess the impact of NQF on Higher Education Institutions and their IQA systems and practices.
- In countries where such a linkage of NQFs and QA systems is not clear: Are there plans to link QA and NQF? In what direction is the national debate going? Where are the main obstacles?
- Describe the common ground of QA work in the TVET and HE sectors.
- Compare and assess the linkages between the provisions foreseen in the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF; quadrant 'NQFs') and the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF).

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This report is in four sections:

- The first section outlines the regional initiatives that impact on the QFs and QAFs in ASEAN.
- The second section outlines the status of NQFs and key features of QA arrangements, the linkages and impact.
- The third section outlines identified implementation opportunities and challenges of EQA and IQA and the link to NQFs.
- The final section outlines recommendations on how to strengthen national and regional initiatives in QA and QF.

A summary of the methodology is included in Appendix 1. The methodology included a survey questionnaire and a face to face interview. ASEAN country overviews are provided in Appendix 2. A list of individuals or organisations who contributed to each country overview is included in Appendix 3.

Regional Initiatives

The two most recent key regional initiatives for the ASEAN member states relate to qualifications frameworks and quality assurance frameworks:

- ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF); and the
- ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF).

The two frameworks have in recent times become key reference points for ASEAN member states to reflect on their qualifications structures and associated quality assurance arrangements. For those countries in the early stages of the development and implementation of their NQF and quality assurance arrangements, they also serve to support and inform key stakeholders involved in policy development.

ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework

The ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) functions, features and governance arrangements have been documented in the previous state of play report (Bateman and Coles 2016). It is a common reference framework that 'functions as a device to enable comparisons of qualifications' across ASEAN Member States.[1] The scope of the framework is all education and training sectors and a key objective is the promotion of lifelong learning.

The AQRF is an eight-level framework, utilising level descriptors that includes levels of learning complexity, the notion of competence and endorses the use of learning outcomes. The AQRF aims to have a neutral influence on national qualifications structures.

In the referencing process the framework requires member states to benchmark their quality assurance systems against regional or international frameworks, with three frameworks specifically mentioned:

- The East Asia Summit Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Quality Assurance Framework (includes the quality principles, agency quality standards and quality indicators)

- The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Guidelines of Good Practice for Quality Assurance[2]

- The ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework.[3]

At the time of publication, the AQRF is in the implementation stage of development.

ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework

The ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF) evolved as an initiative of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN). The AQAN was registered in 2014 as an international association network under the Societies Act 1966, Malaysia. AQAN was accredited as an entity associated with ASEAN on 1 August 2016.[4] The AQAF was approved in 2013.[5]

The AQAF aims to 'promote regional harmonization' in education and training 'by developing a quality assurance framework'…'with regional identities where the ASEAN countries could benchmark and align their quality assurance systems'.[6] It aims to 'serve as

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[1] *ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework*, 2015, p. 2.
[2] Requirements for full member.
[3] Requirements for full member.
[4] ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework 2016, p. 3.
[5] ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework 2016, p. 3.
[6] ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework 2016, p. 4 - 5.

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a common reference point for quality assurance agencies' and education and training institutions 'as they strive towards harmonization amidst the diversity of higher education systems, cultures and traditions within the region'.[7]

The AQAF consists of four interrelated principles, commonly referred to as 'quadrants':

1. External Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAA)
2. External Quality Assurance (EQA) Standards and Processes
3. Internal (Institutional) Quality Assurance (IQA)
4. National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The framework uses generic principles supported by statements of good practice. Like the East Asia Summit TVET Quality Assurance Framework, the AQAF makes it clear that it is not meant to be prescriptive. The AQAF is stated to be an inspirational document that aims to 'promote good practices for internal and external quality assurance as well as the establishment and implementation of national qualifications frameworks in the ASEAN Member States'.[8]

The AQAF differs from the other two quality assurance frameworks by including the fourth quadrant 'NQF'. The AQAF recognises the role an NQF has in quality assuring qualifications and notes that not all EQAA are fully responsible for NQFs. The AQAF indicates that EQAA should advise their role in relation to NQFs, if any.

The NQF quadrant embraces 10 standards:

1. 'NQF facilitates the progressive nature of learning and training with the inclusion of recognition of prior learning.
2. NQF supports student and workforce mobility through recognition of qualifications, including lifelong learning
3. NQF is based on learning outcomes that emphasize student-centred learning and student competencies
4. NQF supports consistency, transparency and flexibility of learning pathways and progression.
5. NQF is generally defined by levels, descriptors, and can be based on a credit system.
6. NQF must be supported by relevant national policies
7. Stakeholders must be consulted and actively involved in the development and implementation of the NQF.
8. The implementation of the NQF is to be carried out by an authorized body and supported by a set of agreed quality assurance principles and standards.
9. NQF is dynamic and should be reviewed to meet the changing needs and developments.
10. NQF should be complemented by an authorized information centre' (AQAF 2016, p. 35-38).

The AQAF in its description of an NQF supports the AQRF in a number of ways. The AQAF reinforces the implementation of learning outcomes as an intrinsic aspect of an NQF and also that the NQF is defined by levels and descriptors. Both these aspects are complementary to statements within the AQRF.

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[7] ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework 2016, p. 5.
[8] ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework 2016, p. 5.

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National structures

NQFs

Basis of the NQFs

As mentioned in Bateman and Coles (2016) NQFs are established through various processes such as:

- legislation or legislative instruments specifically related to the framework; or
- legislation or legislative instruments related to a responsible agency whose remit includes the framework; or
- achieved through collaboration of various agencies and strategies, e.g. the Australian Qualifications Framework.

A summary of the legislative basis of the ASEAN member state NQFs are listed below.

Table 1: Basis of NQFs

Country	Legislated and described	Mentioned in other legislation
Brunei Darussalam	-	Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council Order 2011
Cambodia	Sub decree No. 153/2014 on Cambodia National Qualifications Framework	-
Indonesia	Presidential Decree 8/2012 Higher Education Law 12/2012 Ministerial Regulation 73/2013 Ministerial Regulation 49/2014	-
Laos	-	-
Malaysia	-	Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007
Myanmar	-	-
Philippines	Executive Order 83, series of 2012 (EO 83, s. 2012) This Order institutionalizes the Philippine Qualifications Framework. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) for EO 83 on December 17, 2012.	Senate Bill [ongoing legislation in the current Congress]. Draft Bill: Act institutionalizing the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) and establishing the PQF-National Coordinating Council
Singapore+	-	Implicit in Singapore Workforce Development Agency Act
Thailand	-	National Qualifications Framework (Thailand NQF)
Vietnam	Decision on Approval for Vietnamese Qualifications Framework October 2016	-

Note: +sector QF
Source: Country reports

The legislative basis of an NQF affects the governance arrangements of the framework. In the case of Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam a key quality assurance agency has the remit of the NQF or sector QF. The Philippines on the other hand is developing through legislation a coordinating council for the PQF — the PQF-National Coordinating Council. In other cases, the management of the NQF is a shared responsibility, with few mechanisms to coordinate strong collaboration.

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Level of implementation

Within the ASEAN region, each country is at different levels of planning or implementing an NQF. Some countries are still proposing frameworks whilst in others, these are already well established and in review. Since the state of play report (Bateman and Coles 2016) some movement has been noted in the implementation of NQFs.

The state of play report outlined the development of an NQF according to the following general categories:

1. No intent
2. Desired but no progress made
3. Background planning underway
4. Initial development and design completed
5. Some structures and processes agreed and documented
6. Some structures and processes inaugurated and operational
7. Structures and processes established for 5 years
8. Review of structures and processes proposed or underway.[9]

The table below outlines the current level of establishment of the NQFs in the region.

Table 2: NQF summary

Country	Level of establishment	Stage
Brunei Darussalam	Inaugurated 2013, implemented	6
Cambodia	Inaugurated 2012, initial stages of implementation	5
Indonesia	Inaugurated 2012, initial stages of implementation	6
Lao PDR	Planned	3
Malaysia	Inaugurated 2007, fully implemented and at review stage	8
Myanmar	Initial agreement reached, but not yet inaugurated	4
Philippines	Inaugurated 2012, initial stages of implementation	5
Singapore	Sector QF – Workforce Skills Qualifications system, Inaugurated 2003	7
Thailand	Inaugurated 2014, initial stages of implementation, 3 established sub frameworks (i.e. skills, professional and higher education)	4
Vietnam	Inaugurated 2016, initial stages of implementation	4

In late 2016, Vietnam passed a decree for the establishment of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF), an eight-level framework. Since the state of play report (Bateman and Coles 2016) Thailand has made some changes to the structure of its NQF, changing from a nine-level framework, to an eight-level framework.

At the time of publication, Myanmar has come to an agreed structure for its framework, but has not yet formulated a decree or similar document for the NQF to be endorsed. Discussions were still underway in Lao PDR to finalise an agreed structure for its framework. Both countries are proposing an eight-level framework.

Information specific to the Vietnam Qualifications Framework, and the framework proposed by both Lao PDR and Myanmar is included in their country overviews (Appendix 2).

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[9] These categories were utilised in the initial research for the development of the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework by Bateman, Keating, Burke, Coles & Vickers (Vol IV, 2012) based on a scale developed by James Keevy, Borhene Chakroun & Arjen Deij (2010). These categories were used in Bateman and Coles 2016; however Category 6 has been adjusted slightly for this report.

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Impact of NQFs

The level of implementation as indicated in Table 2 often belies the impact NQFs have had on the qualifications system and achieving the perceived or expected outcomes of introducing an NQF. The state of play report (Bateman and Coles 2016) outlined some common themes amongst the ASEAN member states, including the ordering and specification of qualifications, the promotion of multiple pathways for learners, contributing to lifelong learning, encouraging collaboration between different education and training sectors and players within the system, and promoting international recognition.

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP; 2010), the EU's decentralised agency for the TVET sector, has defined five stages in the development of NQFs:

1. Policy discussions with no concrete implementation;

2. Policy, the direction is set but there is no concrete implementation;

3. Implementation has occurred; the infrastructure for change is put in place, such as funding, management and a communications strategy;

4. a) Practice through pilot schemes; people use the new arrangements;
4. b) Practice is fully applied; all old methods are adapted to the new methods; and

5. Effect; the new system delivers benefits to individuals, organisations and society.

CEDEFOP's Stage 5 focuses on whether the new system has led to benefits to individuals, organisations and society, expanding on the notion of NQF review in the final stage of the model proposed by Bateman et al (2012).

For most ASEAN member states, given the short time since the introduction of an NQF, any reviews of perceived benefits have not been investigated. A few countries are considering using the East Asia Summit Technical and Vocational Education and Training Quality Assurance Framework (EAS TVET QA Framework) quality indicators to reflect on the effectiveness of quality assurance systems and initiatives undertaken by responsible bodies, but have not proceeded beyond the early stages of discussion and determining existing data fields that are currently being collected.

Regardless, anecdotal evidence from the country respondents indicated that the introduction of the AQRF and of NQFs has placed a strong focus on implementing learning outcomes, and has raised the profile of implementing strong quality assurance arrangements amongst HEIs and other stakeholders.

Relationship of an NQF with quality assurance arrangements

There are essentially two ways of viewing how an NQF relates to quality assurance arrangements. Some countries view an NQF as incorporating quality assurance arrangements, such as described below in Figure 1.

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Figure 1: NQF incorporates QA

However, Bateman and Coles (2016, p. 14) indicated that in some cases an 'NQF is simply seen as a catalogue or classifier of all qualifications in a country' with little reference to the quality assurance arrangements of these qualifications. Coles (2016) expands on this notion in a recent paper and notes that it is possible to view 'quality assurance processes and their governance as independent of the national framework' and that it is 'possible to conclude that a NQF can work to support quality assurance but is not necessarily central to it'.[10]

Coles (2016) indicates that it is often the governance arrangements that bring the NQF and the quality assurance arrangements together, as a single body could be created to manage and promote the NQF and also to manage the quality assurance arrangements. However, in the region the model of one body responsible for the NQF and for the quality assurance arrangements (of one or more sectors) is not a model that has been widely implemented.

Within ASEAN, the interconnectedness of the NQF *to* the quality assurance arrangements is the commonly accepted view. This interconnectedness of the NQF is exemplified in the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (Figure 2):

Figure 2: AQAF quadrants

Within the region, the situation that multiple players are responsible for the management of the NQF and of the various quality assurance arrangements poses a challenge for countries. More specifically, it becomes increasingly complex to demonstrate clarity and transparency of their systems, and to ensure the interconnectedness between the NQF and the QA arrangements.

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[10] Coles 2016, p. 24.

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Quality Assurance

Overview of QA

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD; 2007, p. 6) defines a qualifications system as 'the means of developing and operationalising national or regional policy on qualifications, institutional arrangements, quality assurance processes, assessment and awarding processes, skills recognition and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society.'

Within this definition, it is the aspect of quality assurance that is of interest. CEDEFOP (2011, pp. 84-85) defines quality assurance in education and training as including the:

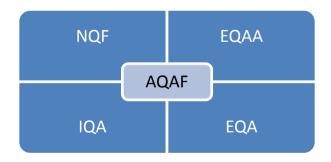> 'Activities involving planning, implementation, evaluation, reporting, and quality improvement, implemented to ensure that education and training (content of programmes, curricula, assessment and validation of learning outcomes, etc.) meet the quality requirements expected by stakeholders.'

Quality assurance in education and training aims to instil confidence in stakeholders that quality requirements, as they pertain to the qualifications issued, will be fulfilled.[11] Quality assurance of education and training generally centres on the approval and monitoring of the product (i.e. the program) and of the provider (i.e. the HEIs); the monitoring of assessment, certification and graduation procedures and outcomes; system wide evaluations of quality; and the provision of public information on the performance of providers.[12]

Within countries, the functions mentioned above may be shared across different types of agencies, such as quality assurance agencies, awarding bodies, or licensing or professional bodies.[13] The ASEAN member states quality assurance models reflect a number of these options.

Bateman and Coles (2017a, UNESCO) in the synthesis report of TVET quality assurance arrangements in the Asia-Pacific region identified five types of governance arrangements of quality assurance. The five types are listed below:

- Type 1: All quality assurance of all education and training (including school, TVET and higher education qualifications) is directed by a single body, operating under national legislation or regulations.
- Type 2: All quality assurance of post-compulsory school qualifications (including TVET and higher education qualifications) is directed by a single body, operating under national legislation or regulations.
- Type 3: Quality assurance of TVET qualifications is seen as separate from the quality assurance of other education sector qualifications, and is directed by a single body, under national legislation or regulations.
- Type 4: The quality assurance of TVET qualifications is carried out by two or more bodies; each body directs operations across their fields of competence.
- Unassigned: Quality assurance processes are under development and it is not yet possible to classify them in terms of the other types.[14]

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[11] AS/NZS ISO 9000:2006: Quality management systems—Fundamentals and vocabulary, June 2006, p. 9.
[12] Bateman, Keating, Gillis, Dyson, Burke & Coles 2012, p. 8 & 9. Also cited in Bateman and Coles 2016.
[13] Bateman, Keating, Gillis, Dyson, Burke & Coles 2012, p. 9.
[14] Minor adaptation from Bateman and Coles, UNESCO 2017a, p. 17.

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These governance types are equally applicable to the higher education sector and higher education qualifications. A scan of the arrangements of quality assurance of higher education in the ASEAN member states indicates that the most common types used in ASEAN member states are Type 2, as well as Type 3 and Type 4 (as it applies to higher education). However, in these types, quality assurance is seen as a shared responsibility with HEIs rather than the quality assurance body taking sole responsibility.

Level of implementation

ASEAN member states are at different stages of planning and implementing quality assurance arrangements. In some cases, the quality assurance system is of long standing and is linked to an established NQF, while in other countries the quality assurance system is being refined and is generally linked to a recently-developed NQF or the quality assurance arrangements are being designed to be linked to an NQF that is still in the development stage.

Bateman and Coles (2017b, UNESCO) in the *Guidelines for the Quality Assurance of TVET Qualifications in the Asia-Pacific region* indicated that there are essentially five stages of implementation of quality assurance arrangements, as follows:

1. Emerging: Initial discussions for a systemic approach are underway.
2. Entry: An overarching vision of QA of qualifications has been agreed upon.
3. Intermediate: QA structures and processes have been agreed upon, communicated and are operational.
4. Advanced: QA structures and processes have been established for five years.
5. Mature: A review of QA structures and processes is underway.[15]

Although these stages were used to describe the implementation of a TVET quality assurance system, they could equally be applied to quality assurance in other education and training sectors, e.g. higher education. The features of each of these stages are described in Table 3: **Stages of implementation of quality assurance**

Table 3: Stages of implementation of quality assurance

Stage	Description	Situation
1. Emerging	A systematic approach to QA is desired, but no progress has been made.	Some quality assurance requirements of qualifications may be documented and implemented, but the approach is ad hoc. The approach may not be well understood by key stakeholders. A desire for a systematic approach to quality assurance of qualifications has been voiced by various stakeholders and discussed in policy documents, but no authoritative commitment has been made to a systematic approach.
2. Entry	An overarching vision of QA of qualifications has been agreed upon.	Commitment to a systematic approach to quality assurance of qualifications has been made by the responsible bodies or assessment providers. This commitment is documented in a policy paper or statement, vision statement, legislation and/or decree. The overarching design of the quality assurance of qualifications has been documented, and has been shared with key stakeholders for feedback and confirmation.

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[15] Adapted from the categories used in the initial research for the development of the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (Bateman et al., 2012) based on a scale developed by Keevy, Chakroun and Deij (2010).

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Stage	Description	Situation
3. Intermediate	QA structures and processes have been agreed upon and communicated, and are operational	The quality assurance structures and processes of qualifications have been documented, agreed upon and made public. Documentation related to quality assurance of qualifications could include: • Quality standards • Quality assurance policies and procedures • Data standards for the systematic collection of data Pilot schemes are in the early stages of implementation. The agreed upon quality assurance structures and processes are being implemented across the scope of QA of qualifications.
4. Advanced	QA structures and processes have been established for five years	The quality assurance structures and processes of qualifications have been operational for five years. Implementation includes harmonization[16] of quality assurance structures and processes, monitoring and continuous improvement, internal evaluation and external evaluation.
5. Mature	A review of QA structures and processes is underway	The responsible bodies and/or assessment providers are reviewing the fitness for purposes and sustainability of the quality assurance structures and processes of qualifications. This review is a systemic one at the national or education institution level, and it includes all key stakeholders.

Source: Adapted from Bateman and Coles (2017b, UNESCO)

Approaches to QA

The aforementioned quality assurance definitions of the OECD (2007) and CEDEFOP (2011) do not differentiate between external quality assurance and internal quality assurance, but view quality assurance as an integrated process within a qualifications system. However, a recent focus in ASEAN has been on the identification of the EQAA and their role, and hence a focus on external and internal quality assurance.

Not all countries interpreted *external* in the same way and this is discussed later in this report, and is evidenced within their country overviews.

The table below highlights the different broad approaches to quality assurance within each ASEAN member state, based on whether the QA is external or internal. *External* in this table is interpreted as being quality assurance that is not the responsibility of the HEI or undertaken by the HEI. It does not describe or provide for the various nuances of externality as discussed later in this report.

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[16] Harmonization is about bringing into agreement (harmony) related quality assurance structures and processes. It does not necessarily mean that all structures and processes are the same.

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Table 4: Overview of QA approaches

Responsible for…	Approval (initial) of HEIs	Monitoring of HEIs	Approval of programmes	Approval to deliver programmes	Monitoring programmes
Brunei Darussalam					
Public / self-accrediting HEIs	External	External	Internal	Internal	External Internal
Other HEIs	External	External	External	External	External
Cambodia					
Public HEIs	External	External	External	External	External
Other HEIs / Private HEIs	External	External	External	External/ Internal	External
Indonesia					
Public / self-accrediting HEIs	External	External	External	External	External
Other HEIs / Private HEIs	External	External	External	External	External
Lao PDR					
Public HEIs	External	External	External	External	Internal
Private HIEs	External	External	External	External	Internal
Malaysia					
Public and/or other HEIs	External	External	External	External	External
Self-accrediting HEIs	External	Internal External	Internal External	Internal External	Internal External
Myanmar					
Public HEIs	External	External	External	External	External
Private HIEs	External	External	External	External	External
Philippines					
Public and/or Self-accrediting HEIs	External	External	Internal External	Internal External	Internal External
Other/Private HEIs	External	External	External	External	External
Singapore					
Public HEIs	External	External	External	Self-approval	Internal
Other HEIs / Private HEIs	External	External	External	External	External
WSQ Training Providers	External	External	External	External	External
Thailand					
Autonomous Public HEIs	External	External	Internal	Internal	External
Other HEIs / Private HEIs	External	External	External	External	External
Vietnam					
Universities - autonomous	External	External	Internal	Internal	External
Universities - non-autonomous	External	External	External	External	Internal External

Source: Country reports

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The predominant approach in the ASEAN member states to quality assurance is external with some use of internal approval processes. Internal approval processes tended to focus on programme accreditation, and in some instances, this is the result of a status gained by institutions indicating that the entities have the capacity to accredit and review their own qualifications, or, in some instances that the status is assumed due to being public institutions.

External QA

The state of play report (Bateman and Coles 2016) indicated that, in some ASEAN member states, there is not a strong history of external quality assurance across all types of higher education providers; which may be in part due to an historical context of public universities leading the higher education system within the country. The increased interest in external quality assurance may be the result of the perceived need for external quality assurance arising as the provision of higher education is broadened by other provider types and numbers, or of the increased interest in NQFs, quality assurance and mutual recognition agreements within the region.

Except for the more mature quality assurance systems within ASEAN, the focus of quality assurance employed by a responsible agency/ies was on institution accreditation and review. This approach reflected the implementation issues faced by the country and also the stage of implementation of quality assurance within the system. HEI approval and review was seen to address the quality of programmes without imposing additional requirements on HEIs that may be struggling to implement quality assurance arrangements internally and to respond to greater monitoring by the responsible agency.

The approval and monitoring of HEIs varied from '*assumed*' for particular providers (e.g. public universities) to '*structured*' for specific HEI types (e.g. private universities), to '*mandated*' for all. In many instances the requirements for initial approval of providers was documented in legislation or government regulations, or in some instances included quality standards. For some countries the criteria for approval were not clear, and in some instances, they were assured through a licensing process.

In the instances where legislation or quality standards existed for approval or monitoring of HEIs, the requirements generally focussed on similar areas, such as facilities and equipment, financial capability, qualified staff, student support, and programme design.

In all instances where approval was required to establish a HEI there was some form of application process, including submission of an application evidenced by business plans and site plans. In some instances, approval was provisional to enable the HEI to build infrastructure and programmes, prior to final approval. In other instances, infrastructure, facilities, staff and programmes needed to be in place for approval to be granted. In almost all instances, approval was dependent on a site visit by a team connected to the responsible agency.

External monitoring of HEIs also followed a common format across the ASEAN member states. In almost all instances, HEIs are required to undertake a self-assessment and for the resultant report to be used to inform external monitoring. These self-assessment reports were generally to be submitted annually and in other cases were to be conducted prior to an external monitoring visit by a responsible agency. The use of these reports was limited to informing external monitoring visits and not for the external agency to determine the rigour of the self-assessment and how this can inform the capability of the HEI.[17]

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[17] This is an aspect of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) model of external monitoring.

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Across the ASEAN member states approval and monitoring of qualifications rests with a responsible agency or rests with the HEI (with or without oversight or guidelines established at a national level). Often the different approaches relate to the HEI type, as often universities in some countries have their own legislation and are permitted under this legislation to 'self-accredit qualifications' e.g. Singapore, and in other instances 'self-accrediting' status was earnt, e.g. Malaysia.

Programme approval requirements, such as quality standards in regard to the development and approval process and the format of curriculum, were not transparent across the member states. In most cases, programme design approval and approval to deliver a programme were intrinsically linked. In a number of countries, programme standards (such as establishing agreed knowledge and other delivery requirements for specific disciple areas) were seen as a key aspect of quality assuring qualifications, e.g. Malaysia and Philippines.

Only a few countries had a public register of approved qualifications able to be provided by HEIs.

Internal QA

The state of play report (Bateman and Coles 2016) indicated that within the ASEAN member states there has been a growing interest in developing the capacity of institutions to implement internal evaluation and other quality assurance approaches. The increased interest may be in part due to the increased awareness of the AUN-QA guidelines which are developed for universities for institutional review and programme review, but may also be due to the recent impact of the AQRF and the AQAF.

Internal quality assurance is based within the notion that quality assurance of education and training is a shared responsibility. Therefore, for ASEAN member states internal quality assurance is clearly understood as resting with individual HEIs.

The AQAF (2016, p. 38) notes that for internal quality assurance:

> 'The institution should have formal mechanisms for approval, periodical reviews and monitoring of programmes and awards.'

This principle aims to ensure that an institution's programmes are 'well designed, relevant, current and up to date' (p. 38).

All ASEAN member states require HEIs to have in place and implement quality assurance arrangements. The requirements are often stipulated in legislation such as decrees and ministerial regulations, and others are situated in quality standards. The table below summarises the quality assurance requirements.

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Table 5: Internal quality assurance summary

	IQA legislated	IQA required	Comment
Brunei Darussalam		✓	All HEIs have to have a coherent IQA management system: including organisational structure, responsibilities, procedures and resources for setting and implementing quality policies. HEIs through their IQA need to report their self-assessment to the Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council (BDNAC) twice a year. To be used as the basis for the external audit (for desktop analysis and later site-visits).
Cambodia		✓	National Standards requires HEIs to establish IQA mechanism to ensure the quality of their academic programmes and services.
Indonesia		✓	National Standards for Higher Education (2015 revised) requires institutions to implement IQA on an annual basis, using an ADRI cycle (Approach – Deployment – Results – Improvement).
Lao PDR	✓		Higher Education Decree 2015 requires HEIs to have a 'quality assurance organization and network'.
Malaysia		✓	Both codes of practice require HEIs to have in place a system for the internal review of programs.
Myanmar	-	-	Survey of current practice underway to inform policy
Philippines		✓	Required as part of Institutional Sustainability Assessment
Singapore		✓	Requirements vary across types of providers. Public HEIs are responsible for own IQA. For private HEIs and WSQ providers IQA is reviewed as part of EQA.
Thailand	✓		Ministerial regulation on the Systems, Regulations and Methods for Internal Quality Assurance among Higher Education Institutions (2003, amended and updated 2010). HEIs are to implement an IQA system. Thailand Professional Qualification Institute (TPQI) assessment providers adhere to ISO/IEC 17024:2012 related to Personnel Certification Bodies)/Certification Bodies for Persons. Includes the requirement for the certification body to annually review its management system.
Vietnam	✓		Law on Higher Education 08/2012 indicates that universities are responsible for quality assurance

Source: Country reports

A number of ASEAN member states have clear requirements as to what IQA arrangements are to be established within the HEI, for example:

• Lao PDR decree requires the HEIs to have a quality assurance unit that is to 'be independent in terms of academic management' and is to be 'under the guidance of the boards of directors of the institutions';

• Thailand's ministerial regulation states that HEIs must have a unit or committee responsible for implementing an internal quality assurance system and to coordinate with external offices. The quality assurance system is to address: curriculum, faculty members and a faculty development system, education media and teaching techniques, library and study resources, educational equipment, learning environment and academic services, student evaluations and outcomes, and other relevant aspects that the HEI thinks appropriate.

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Most country respondents indicated that there were not sufficient regulations or guidelines to implement strong IQA processes within HEIs. In Myanmar, research has been undertaken with institutes to inform future policy.

The capability of HEIs to undertake IQA was considered variable across types of providers in a number of countries. One respondent to the research survey indicated that HEIs fell into three broad categories:

- those that have strong internal QA systems and have embraced the benefits of QA;
- those that respond constructively to EQA requirements; or
- those that need more active oversight by the responsible agency. This last group has not yet developed sufficient knowledge of QA processes and mechanisms or a sufficient understanding of the role of QA in improving their operations.

It was apparent from the survey responses that it is not always clear as to what internal quality assurance entails. Most country respondents focussed their survey response on self-assessment and submitting self-assessment reports to the responsible body. Very few respondents considered the formal mechanisms for approval of programmes within the HEI as a part of their own IQA accountability, and how programme design would meet the needs of stakeholders and of the NQF. It is critical that strong processes are implemented at both the development stage and the review stage to ensure that the programmes and programme delivery are (and remain) current and meet the needs of stakeholders such as industry and civil society.

The *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (2015) provide a concise statement as to the scope of internal quality assurance in relation to programme design and review (2015, p. 11 and 15):

> **STANDARD:**
> Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

and…

> **STANDARD:**
> Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

QA and the link to NQF

The most obvious link between an NQF and QA strategies is in the area of programme design, approval and review processes.

For some countries with mature NQFs and quality assurance systems this link is clear and demonstrable in quality standards or in guidelines. One respondent to the survey indicated that the implementation of a NQF has given clarity to programme design, whilst others indicated that the introduction of an NQF has motivated the shift to learning outcomes.

For some countries with recently developed NQFs or emerging NQFs the link is more tenuous. For those countries with recently inaugurated NQFs and QA arrangements, the regulatory framework or guidelines have not been established to inform the accreditation functions. This was also the case for EQA monitoring processes, where instruments for review have not incorporated the requirements of the qualifications meeting the outcomes of the NQF. In contrast to other ASEAN member states, Thailand's NQF functions as a 'national reference point' that aims to link the existing sector qualifications frameworks. As such accreditation functions undertaken by the Office of Higher Education Commission are based on the Thailand Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, not on the recently inaugurated NQF.

Unlike institutional approval and review processes, the processes related to ensuring that qualifications meet the NQF outcomes and are learning outcomes focussed is less clear. Further work by the majority of countries will need to be undertaken to build trust in these processes.

Links to TVET

Respondents to the survey indicated that the links between higher education QA processes and that of TVET QA processes varied across countries. This variation often reflected the level of integration of TVET into the higher education in the particular country. For example, in Brunei Darussalam and Laos the two sectors are integrated into a post-secondary sector and the similar or same requirements and processes apply. For some countries, there is a strong commitment to harmonizing processes (e.g. Malaysia) or working on joint NQF committees (e.g. Philippines). For other countries, such as Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand, the work to link with TVET is ongoing. In Myanmar, it is anticipated that TVET will be overseen by the same responsible body.

Role of EQAAs in the QA system

The role of External Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAAs) in the quality assurance system has gained increased interest and credence over recent times across the region. This may be in part due to the international discourse on quality assurance and/or the emergence of regional frameworks (e.g. AQAF) placing emphasis on the role of the EQAA and its relationship to the providers it quality assures.

Within ASEAN, there is no one model of EQAA or of external QA.

The role of the EQAA is not clearly defined within the AQAF, but it notes that the EQAA is 'an appropriate and legally established external body mandated and dedicated to conduct quality assurance' (AQAF 2016, p. 16).

The AQAF (2016, p. 17 - 18) outlines the principles that apply to an EQAA. It includes:

> 'The EQAA has autonomous responsibility for its operations, and its decision-making processes and judgements are free from undue influences.'

The terms 'external', 'autonomous', and the notion of independence are not further explained in the AQAF and there is no regional acceptance as to what constitutes an EQAA. However, the term 'independent' and 'external' could be aligned to the concept of quality management (e.g. ISO 9000) whereby the words 'audit' are sometimes preceded with 'independent' and with 'external', indicating that the audit process is to be performed by an unbiased or impartial third-party external to the organisation.

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As such it is clear that the EQAA is to have a real and/or perceived level of independence from the decisions made.

Under the AQAF (2016, p. 17-18) the EQAA is to have the following:

> 'An established legal basis and is formally recognized and trusted by competent public authorities in its home country.
>
> A standard and transparent system for appointing or electing members of the Board.'

This determination provides a narrow view of an independent body, i.e. that it has a board, and does not recognise other formulations of an EQAA, that would provide for a desired level of independence.

For some ASEAN member states, it may prove problematic to demonstrate that the quality assurance arrangements in higher education are undertaken by an EQAA that addresses these principles, given the design of their QA system.

The focus on an EQAA as the key agent for QA and the differentiation between external and internal quality assurance belies the complexity of a quality assurance system for higher education. In many respects, a quality assurance system is made up of various players with specific roles within the system. The design of the system may include multiple EQAAs, internal high-level QA agencies, as well as HEIs. It is important for the success of quality assurance strategies that the linkages and interrelationships between the responsible parties are clear and the QA strategies is systematically implemented.

For some member states the differentiation between EQA and IQA is less clear. This is often the case when ministries are quality assuring their own institutions, or when non-regulatory QA agencies are established by stakeholder groups to undertake QA processes.

In some member states, the QA system design is less clear. For example:

- the emphasis is on an EQAA without any regulatory accreditation function which belies the role and importance of a ministry that does have this role;
- the independent quasi autonomous agency responsible for EQA has been moved under the remit of the ministry responsible for education; or
- there are agencies that provide for their member HEIs a form of assurance of provision but have no regulatory function.

Currently, the role of organisations involved in EQA and IQA in ASEAN can be separated into three distinct groups. The table below summarises each group, their key features and roles.

Table 6: Groups responsible for QA

Organisations	Features and roles

Responsible agency - EQA	• Quasi autonomous non-government body that demonstrates:
	   • Independence in decision making
	   • Confers license, approval to practice, approval of programmes under the NQF
	   • Can apply rewards and sanctions
	OR
	• Quasi-autonomous non-government body (e.g. ONESQA in Thailand) that acts as a 'watchdog' or independent voice for the review of the education and training system

Other agencies	• Units within Ministries • Responsible for conferring licenses, approval to practice, approval of programmes under the NQF, approval to deliver programmes

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Organisations	Features and roles

	• Level of independence and no undue influence on decision making may be less clear, especially if the HEIs 'belong' to the Ministry.
	• Delegated Accrediting Agencies
	    • Has delegated operations from a responsible body
	    • Responsible for the review and monitoring of programmes and institutions
	    • Level of independence and no undue influence on decisions may be less clear
	    • Responsible agency is responsible for establishing the quality assurance criteria for selection and monitoring of the delegated agency, including reporting requirements and moderation of decisions. These processes should be transparent.
	• Other Accrediting Agencies
	    • May have no legal or regulatory basis
	    • Established by stakeholders
	    • Confer some form of status and confidence to own stakeholders and others
	    • Level of independence and no undue influence on decisions may be less clear

HEIs - IQA	• Individual HEIs • Internal processes for internal approval to deliver programmes [maybe non-regulatory or regulatory], evaluation and continuous improvement

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NQF and QA challenges

The survey responses revealed a number of challenges facing the ASEAN member states.

Use of QA Frameworks

One challenge for ASEAN member states is how to use the regional or international QA frameworks for policy making, continuous improvement and for referencing to the AQRF.

The East Asia Summit TVET Quality Assurance Framework and the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework are both enabling and aspirational frameworks and were not necessarily developed for making definitive determinations of quality within the system. However, they can be used by policy makers to reflect on their education and training system and to look for areas of improvement.

Both the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework and the INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice for Quality Assurance take a similar approach to quality assurance. Both strongly address the functions and roles of External Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAAs), and their relationship with education and training institutes. The ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework also focusses on Internal (institutional) Quality Assurance (IQA). The focus on an EQAA however, can be misleading and may oversimplify the role of one agency responsible for aspects of quality assurance over other agencies or bodies within the country that also have a role in the qualifications system.

The East Asia Summit TVET Quality Assurance Framework[18] takes a different approach to quality assurance to that of the other two frameworks. The framework includes quality principles and agency quality standards, as well as advisory quality indicators and provider quality standards. The quality indicators have been developed to form the basis for evaluation and continuous improvement processes in relation to a country's TVET system. The quality indicators can be used to assess the effectiveness of the TVET system and the implementation of national policies or initiatives. These indicators reflect international approaches to quality assurance, such as the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training. This framework 'is designed to promote better vocational education and training by providing authorities with common tools for the management of quality'.[19] The more recent *UNESCO Guidelines for the Quality Assurance of TVET Qualifications in the Asia-Pacific region* (Bateman and Coles, 2017a UNESCO) outlines quality indicators for countries to reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of their quality assurance system. These international approaches focus on reflecting on the outcomes of the system rather than putting an emphasis on inputs to the system.

Another key challenge for ASEAN member states is how to keep up-to-date with recent regional and international initiatives and determining how the AQRF and AQAF fit with these other initiatives. For those not au fait with quality assurance initiatives, such as those not directly involved with QA (policy makers or higher education sector practitioners), the array of frameworks and agreements can be confusing.

Although the AQRF refers to three quality assurance frameworks, there are other frameworks or guidelines prominent within the region, such as that of the ASEAN University Network – Quality Assurance (AUN-QA). The AUN-QA guidelines provide a basis

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[18] The title of this framework and the implied application to TVET can be misleading, as the framework can be applied to both TVET and higher education sectors. This titling may limit its profile and use across the ASEAN member states.

[19] http://www.eqavet.eu/gns/policy-context/european-quality-assurance-reference-framework.aspx

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for policy makers in regard to institutional evaluation and programme evaluation. The AUN-QA was established in 1998 and its guidelines aim to develop and maintain a high standard of education in the university sector. The AUN-QA guidelines are not 'directives that have to be followed by the universities', but are 'benchmark standards to be used by the universities to see how far they are on track towards quality and quality assurance.'[20] These guidelines and supporting material have been designed by universities, for universities, in the quest for improved quality and greater harmonization across member universities within the region.

However, for some countries the AUN-QA guidelines have become the default standards for external quality assurance arrangements, especially for programme accreditation (i.e. Vietnam), or are used as the basis for internal quality assurance standards (e.g. Cambodia, Myanmar).

Implementation issues

Another challenge for the ASEAN member states is how to facilitate the implementation of the AQRF and the AQAF and to provide clarity as to their purpose and impact on qualifications systems. There needs to be greater awareness as to how these frameworks interconnect with learning outcomes, learner-centred education, mobility, mutual recognition agreements, qualifications, international standards, other frameworks, quality assurance processes and the growing range of multi-level and multi-sectoral stakeholders.

Designing and establishing a QA system that is both effective and efficient requires policy makers to have a strong understanding of QA and also of the role that multiple players have within the system. Some country responses to the survey indicated that there was a lack of clear roles and responsibility within the legislative basis and also a deficit in public awareness. In a number of instances, the legislative basis was not keeping up with desired reforms. In some instances, the proliferation of legislation made for conflicts between documents and consequently a lack of clarity amongst QA players. There was also an apparent lack of linkage of QA and NQFs to national strategies and plans, except in a few countries.

There was also a lack of conceptual understanding as to whether QA was approached from a regulatory and legislative basis, or whether QA was approached as a continuous improvement and supportive process. However, the author is not assuming that either of these two approaches are mutually exclusive.

As previously mentioned in this report, the focus on an EQAA as the basis for quality assurance in a country can belie the complexity of the QA system and the role of other players in QA. This focus may impede implementation of QA strategies and the impact of other QA agencies within the system. Again, more work in terms of clarifying roles and disseminating clear information to stakeholders and regionally is important in developing trust.

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[20] AUN-QA 2006, p. 5.

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It was apparent that in emerging QA systems there was a focus on external institutional approval and monitoring, with less attention on external programme approval processes. This appeared to be more an implementation issue, as for most countries in the group the aim was to implement QA programme approval strategies in the future. However, it may be that responsible agencies were more au fait with QA of institutions, and that HEIs could focus on more concrete areas of concern to that of learning outcomes, NQF outcomes and programme approval.

Finally, any conversation across the region is hampered by national interpretations of various terms. The meaning of 'accreditation' varied across countries and had different nuances and practice within specific contexts - this was often affected by the history and legislation inaugurated in the country. Any further work in this area will require a more universal understanding of the term.

CEDEFOP (2011) defines accreditation of an education or training provider as the 'process of quality assurance through which accredited status is granted to an education or training provider, showing it has been approved by the relevant legislative or professional authorities by having met predetermined standards' (p. 7). It does not however provide an equivalent definition for programme accreditation. The AQRF (2014) uses the term 'registration' for this activity.

The AQRF (2014) defines accreditation as 'the official approval of achievement standards, including qualifications or unit(s) of a qualification, usually for a particular period of time, as being able to meet particular requirements defined by an accrediting agency' (p. 12).

Regardless of the terms used, the focus is on assuring quality of both institutions and programmes within a qualifications system. For member states in ASEAN it is important that each country understands each other's processes to be able to build trust

Barriers and obstacles

Each participating ASEAN country was asked to identify barriers and obstacles to implementing NQFs and QA in their qualifications systems. The issues identified are not dissimilar to the issues identified in the state of play report (Bateman and Coles 2016) in relation to implementing NQFs and undertaking the referencing process.

The identified barriers and obstacles fall into the following broad categories.

Table 7: Issues and barriers

Theme	Details
Capacity of HEIs to implement QA strategies	Varied capacity of HEIs to implement QA strategies, including: developing learning outcomes; revising existing curriculum that uses learning outcomes and aligns to the NQF; developing processes for programme design, development and review. Capacity was in terms of staff knowledge and capability, infrastructure and instruments, time and budget.
Resistance to change	Some countries cited resistance to change in both HEIs and responsible agencies or policy makers. In HEIs this was seen as particularly problematic, as there was a lack of understanding of QA and requirements set by the responsible agency were seen as burdensome and onerous.
Lack of trust	Some countries indicated that there was a lack of trust in the QA arrangements; sometimes as the result of follow up by the responsible agency, e.g. no action been taken of monitoring findings, or of lack of reporting being followed up even if it is a requirement.
Scale of sector	Comments were made in relation to countries with a small higher education sector or those with large higher education sectors. The issues were often the same but the scale of implementation varied. Countries also have the issue of having to be sensitive to the context and speed that change can be achieved.
Capacity of the responsible agency	Issues were identified with some countries in relation to the capacity of the responsible agency to undertake its functions. Concerns mainly centred on staff having a strong understanding of QA processes, and of the technical expertise (subject area) to undertake the work. Concerns about familiarity with other strategies, especially in relation to technical expertise, were not expressed.
Progress for implementation	Implementing the QA strategies that link to NQFs has taken longer than anticipated in some countries. Ensuring commitment from all players in the system was seen as important to implementation. Also, as per the state of play report (Bateman and Coles 2016) it was noted that there was significant effort required to implement QA strategies across all higher education providers, given the range and number of providers in some countries.
Implications of implementing learning outcomes	The link of implementing learning outcomes to quality teaching and assessment was recognised with a number of member states. Lack of knowledge of how to implement learning outcomes in practice was seen as a barrier.

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The way forward

Achievements to date

Much has been achieved since the AQRF concept design was first documented in 2011, and the AQAF was first proposed in 2008. The establishment of both of these frameworks in 2016 and 2017 respectively has created a catalyst for discussion across the region as well as a catalyst for change within countries.

For many ASEAN member states both of these frameworks have created the impetus for change and for others it has confirmed the work that was already underway. The push for harmonization of QA processes and the development of a zone of trust in the field of qualifications should strengthen over time.

Areas for future development

The following key areas of development are important for the further development of QA and the link to the NQF in the ASEAN member states:

1. Continuing to expand and support the use of learning outcomes
2. Strengthening internal quality assurance in HEIs, including capacity of staff and instruments to undertake the work
3. Providing a focus on strengthening programme accreditation processes, especially for HEIs, to ensure that programmes meet the requirements of the relevant NQF but also meet the needs of stakeholders
4. Strengthening the NQF and QA link with other education and training sectors in ASEAN member states.

Recommendations and support to the AMS

In terms of support and capacity development at an ASEAN level the following has been identified.

1. The use of learning outcomes

As noted in the state of play report (Bateman and Coles 2016) there is a need for the dissemination of good practice, the exchange of ideas and for high quality authoritative inputs into the use of learning outcomes. Embedding learning outcomes in practice within HEIs takes time and effort. Continued support and capacity development of policy makers and HEI staff is still required to ensure that learning outcomes continue to be a focus of NQFs and quality education and training.

2. Strengthening internal quality assurance

Another issue related to implementing learning outcomes was that of strengthening internal quality assurance in HEIs. The varied capacity of HEIs within countries to implement IQA is a barrier to systematic implementation. Ensuring that IQA goes beyond preparing self-assessment reports and focusses on both front-end processes as well as review processes will require information dissemination and support to increase the capability of HEIs. HEIs (like policy makers) require the instruments and tools to be able to undertake a holistic and systematic approach to QA. However, like learning outcomes, embedding good practice in terms of QA in HEIs takes time. Utilising both authoritative guidelines and building networks is required.

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3. Strengthening programme approval and review processes

Related to both recommendations listed above, particular focus should be placed on building capacity in terms of programme development, design and review processes. For both HEIs and in some instances responsible bodies, the focus on institutional accreditation processes has delayed progress of designing programmes that meet stakeholder requirements, that ensure alignment to NQF outcomes, and that are documented in terms of learning outcomes. For those with more advanced qualifications systems, revising higher education qualifications to better fit a qualifications framework, and most importantly devising new and valued progression routes is important.

Providing both HEIs and policy makers with the instruments and tools to develop and review programmes is essential for building trust and for the international recognition of qualifications.

4. Strengthening the NQF and QA link with other education and training sectors

The strength of any qualifications system is the linkages made, both vertically and horizontally, within the NQF, and the ability to ensure for learners the progression of learning and multiple pathways to and from learning. The link between TVET and higher education sectors, particularly if the NQF allocates levels to different sectors, and the issues faced at the interface of these levels has proved problematic for some countries.

For countries that have separate governance and QA arrangements, providing for collaboration and sharing of good practice is critical to the overall success of the qualifications system. Providing for various stakeholder conferences, seminars and workshops will help with capacity building and implementation of QA and NQFs, and lead to a common understanding of quality.

Conclusion

The ASEAN member states' quality assurance systems in higher education vary in terms of governance and stage of implementation, however there are similarities. For example, they all use legislation and regulations supported by guidelines and quality standards; and there are responsible bodies that provide oversight of the QA system. The countries also face common challenges, including engaging all stakeholders in QA and ensuring systematic, efficient and effective implementation.

As with any move to implement change and to build trust within the region, there is much to gain from ASEAN member states collaborating and sharing good practice. Both the AQAF and the AQRF provide a forum for such collaboration in both QA and NQFs.

ASEAN member states are encouraged to participate in further collaboration and the sharing of experience, and create a community of practice that has the potential to inform policy and practice. They are also encouraged to persist with implementation strategies and allow sufficient time for good practice to be embedded in the qualifications system.

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Appendix 1: Methodology

The research for this project was undertaken in 2017 across the ten ASEAN countries. The research included a survey and, in almost all cases, a face to face interview.

The survey was based on a survey originally developed and provided to EAS countries through the Australian Government East Asia Summit TVET Quality Assurance Framework, which began in 2012. This survey was used in the previous NQF study (Bateman and Coles 2016) and enhanced again for this study.

For this project the survey was refined to focus on an overview of the NQF, an overview of the quality assurance arrangements (including accreditation of programmes and of providers), internal quality assurance implementation in HEIs, quality assurance linkages with the NQF, linkages with TVET and barriers and obstacles to implementation.

For nine countries, a face-to-face interview was undertaken to assist in the completion of the survey or to update the previous country overview. Singapore did not participate in a face-to-face interview but provided an extensive response to the survey. Only one country did not complete the survey, Indonesia. Information for this country's overview was derived from relevant legislation, previous information of the NQF in the previous NQF study, and from various country PowerPoint presentations on quality assurance.

The survey and the face-to-face interviews formed the basis of the country overviews. All countries were provided with a finalised country summary for confirmation. All countries confirmed their country summary.

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Appendix 2: Country overviews

Brunei Darussalam

Overview of NQF

The Brunei Darussalam Qualifications Framework (BDQF) was issued under the authority of the Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council Order, 2011 (BDNAC Order, 2011). The framework features are summarised below.

Table 1: Summary of the NQF

Item	Level of implementation
Levels	8
Level descriptors	Yes
Qualification types titles specified	Yes
Qualification types descriptors	Yes, non-discipline specific (no specifications for each discipline level)
Control of qualification titles and types	Yes, protocol for adding and removing
Volume of learning or credit value	Yes (duration with notional hours)
Qualification pathways	Specified
Credit transfer system	No (credit transfer guidance only)
Documentation of NQF	One document
Website	Dedicated NQF website [www.moe.gov.bn/bdnac]

The framework as described in Bateman and Coles (2016) has not changed.

The Secretariat of the Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council (BDNAC Secretariat) is responsible for the maintenance and implementation of the Framework as stipulated in the Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council Order 2011 and in the Brunei Darussalam Qualifications Framework.

Overview of the qualifications system

There are a range of providers within the higher education sector:

1. Public universities[21] (4), 3 are established under the Ministry of Education and 1 under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (a teaching college)[22].
2. Polytechnic Brunei (PB) and the Institute of Brunei Technical Education (IBTE), established under the Ministry of Education
3. Private institutions[23] (6).

All institutions, other the one university under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, will be under the purview of the BDNAC.

Higher Education Division (Ministry of Education) is responsible for monitoring performance, policy, and funding of government institutions.

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[21] Public Universities under Ministry of Education: Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), Universiti *Teknologi Brunei* (UTB) and *Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali* (UNISSA). Public University under the Ministry of Religious Affairs: Kolej Universiti Perguruan Ugama Seri Begawan (KUPU SB).

[22] These are the Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), the Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB; until 2016 Institut Teknologi Brunei (ITB)) and the Politeknik Brunei (PB), as well as the Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) which operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

[23] Private Institutions: International Graduate Studies College (IGS College); Laksamana College of Business (LCB), Micronet International College (MIC), Cosmopolitan College of Commerce and Technology (CCCT), BICPA-FTMS Accountancy Academy Sdn. Bhd. (BICPTA-FTMS)

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Most programmes/qualifications within Brunei Darussalam are delivered through twinning or franchise arrangements with international universities.[24]

Overview of Quality Assurance

Summary of Quality Assurance

The Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council Order 2011 outlines the functions of the Council, including:

- Acting as the sole accrediting body
- Providing policies and guidelines for the purpose of assessment and accreditation of higher education qualifications or credentials from within and outside the country
- Approving policies and procedures relating to accreditation of programmes, qualifications and higher education providers.

The Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council Order 2011 indicates that the Secretariat of the Council is responsible (amongst other functions) for:

- Accrediting programs, qualifications and higher education providers (local or foreign)
- Conducting institution audit and review of programmes, qualifications and higher education providers.

The Council has the power to: grant or refuse accreditation, impose conditions, and revoke accreditation.

A summary of the quality assurance mechanisms is noted below.

Table 2: Summary of Quality Assurance

Responsible for…	Approval (initial) of HEIs[25] to operate	Monitoring of HEIs	Approval of programmes of study	Approval to deliver programmes of study	Monitoring programmes of study
Legislation/ regulation etc	Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council Order, 2011 (BDNAC Order, 2011)				
Public HEIs and/or Self-accrediting HEIs	External (through individual legislation)	External	Internal	Internal	External Internal
Other HEIs (Private institutions)	External BDNAC	External BDNAC	External BDNAC	External BDNAC	External BDNAC

Approval of programmes

Given the BDNAC Order 2011, BDNAC is responsible for accreditation of programmes. The guidelines indicate that the criteria to evaluate programme accreditation applications include:

- Duration
- Academic requirements

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[24] Currently, there are four (4) universities collaborated with the local private institutions namely:
- University of Chester, United Kingdom with LCB offering bachelor degrees;
- Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, Malaysia with IGS College offering bachelor degrees, diploma and foundation programmes;
- Universiti Malaysia Sabah with IGS College offering Certificate programmes;
- Open University Malaysia, Malaysia with KI offering bachelor programmes.

[25] HEIs – Higher Education Institutions

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- Content
- Assessment
- Mode – full time/part-time but not online[26] (as no online programmes are accredited)
- Medium of instruction (i.e. language).

The BDNAC website (http://moe.gov.bn/bdnac) indicates that for accreditation purposes, the BDNAC Council is supported by ten sub-committees which are responsible for assessing and evaluating qualifications and for making recommendations to the Council. The disciplines include:

- Accountancy and Management
- Communications
- Education
- Engineering and Architecture
- Environmental Sciences
- Islamic Religious Studies
- Medicine
- Law
- Military
- Info-Communication Technology.

BDNAC also relies on international accreditation of programmes, but still confirms that all criteria are met. For government institutions, programme accreditation is conducted internally through the governance structure of the organisation, e.g. Council processes.

Currently there is no public register of qualifications approved under the purview of the BDNAC.

Approval of providers

The procedures for the approval of private HEIs and, in turn, their HE programmes/qualifications (institutional and programme accreditation) includes:

- Receiving and acknowledging queries or applications by gathering relevant information and preparing working papers or case studies for the relevant sub-committees.
- Submitting the papers to the sub-committees for recommendations.
- Submitting the recommendations to the Council of assessment and decisions.
- Conveying the Council's decisions to the appropriate applicants either by granting the application and issue letter of accreditation or refusing the application stating the ground for refusal.

The approval process is based on standards and guidelines for the programmes and institutions, and on the standards and guidelines for the process of accreditation/audit.

For institution accreditation, there are nine criteria:

1. Background of institution
2. Financial capacity
3. Physical facilities and infrastructure
4. Academic staff, qualifications
5. Ratio of students to staff
6. Internal quality assurance

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[26] BDNAC accredits blended mode of learning which involves face-to-face interaction and online learning for master degrees and above (but does not include programmes or courses in professional fields such as Engineering, Architecture, Accountancy, Law, Medicine, Quantity Surveying, Dental, etc.)

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7. Relationship with universities externally to Brunei Darussalam, including franchise or twinning programmes
8. Performance of graduates, completion rates, employment rates
9. Regional or international accreditation.

Currently there is no public register of HEIs approved under the purview of the BDNAC.

Monitoring of providers and programmes

Quality Assurance mechanisms are fundamental to all aspects of the BDQF. In particular this applies to the determination of the technical and vocational competency standards and qualifications as required by related stakeholders, industry and professional bodies; the teaching mode and delivery on and off the job; student or worker assessment, and the awarding of certificates.

The quality assurance model adopted is based on institutional self-assessment and continuous improvement. Thus, as the sole accrediting agency responsible for quality assurance in the country, the BDNAC has outlined three clusters of activities to support the new national qualifications arrangements, where qualifications are delivered through education and training institutions, that is:

- Establishing a quality management system at the time of registration

- Institutional and programme accreditation

- On-going monitoring and institutional quality audit.

On-going continuous monitoring of the private HEIs and HE programmes/qualifications is done by the BDNAC (through the monitoring committee) via site-visits and compulsory submission of bi-annual report (also known as self-assessment reports) by the private institutions. This is done every year.

Clearer policy for the monitoring of government HEIs is not yet established.

Monitoring reports are not made public.

Internal quality assurance (IQA)

All HEIs have to develop their own coherent internal quality assurance mechanisms which includes a management system with a clear organisational structure and responsibilities (i.e. a Board), as well as procedures and resources for setting and implementing quality policies. The approach to IQA aims to ensure that HEIs have the capability and capacity resources to establish and maintain an environment fit for delivering quality education and training to meet or exceed the specified standards.

HEIs through their IQA need to report to the BDNAC twice a year by generating and summiting their bi-annual report (a self-assessment report) to be used as the basis for the external audit (such as for desktop analysis and later site-visits).

In relation to public universities, they all have a Senate; and the Institute of Brunei Technical Education (IBTE) as well as the Polytechnic Brunei (PB) have a Board of governance which is a statutory body. Internal governance arrangements are to address accreditation and review of qualifications. Government institutions are to provide an annual report to the Ministers Office.

IQA appears to be well understood and working well within institutions.

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Cambodia

Overview of NQF

The Cambodia National Qualifications Framework (CNQF) was established by a sub decree No. 153/2014 on Cambodia National Qualifications Framework. There have been no changes to the framework since Bateman and Coles 2016 report. Below is a summary

Table 1: Summary of the NQF

Item	Level of implementation
Levels	8
Level descriptors	Yes
Qualification types titles specified	Yes
Qualification types descriptors	Yes (different types between academic, and technical and vocational streams)
Control of qualification titles and types	No
Volume of learning or credit value	Yes (credit hours)
Qualification pathways	Statement of intent and within the qualification descriptors
Credit transfer system	Yes (Decision No. 04/04 on Credit Transfer 2004)
Documentation of NQF	One document
Website	No

Article 6 of Sub Decree No. 153/2014 on the CNQF outlines that the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (Accreditation Committee of Cambodia and Directorate General of Higher Education) and the Ministry of Labour and Vocation Training (National Training Board) are responsible for the maintenance and implementation of the NQF.

Overview of the qualifications system

The higher education sector within Cambodia consists of 121 HEIs, of which 48 public and 23 private institutions come directly under the remit of the MOEYS. The other institutions come under the remit of 16 other ministries.

Overview of Quality Assurance

Summary of Quality Assurance

Quality assurance in Cambodia is led by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MOEYS) through the Accreditation Committee of Cambodia (ACC) and the Directorate General of Higher Education (DGHE) (Department of Higher Education along with the Department of Science and Research). The Department of Higher Education has remit over Diploma and Bachelor programmes, and the Department of Science and Research has remit over master and doctorate programmes.

Providers seek approval for a license to operate from MOEYS. Under the Education Law, the ministry is responsible for evaluation and assessment of documents for licensing. This excludes education on religious scriptures, technical education, education of military strategy and national security, education on the management of territorial administration, education provided by Royal School of Administration and technical and professional education for the courts offered by the training institution of legal and court professions.

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The Accreditation Committee of Cambodia was established through Royal Decree No. 0303/129 dated 31 March 2003; which states that establishing and administering Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is subject to the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. Whereas the institutional accreditation provision of HEIs is subject to the jurisdiction of the Accreditation Commission of Cambodia (ACC). The latter was initially listed under the Office of the Council of Ministers but has since been moved and attached to MOEYS. The ACC functions through its Governing Board. The ACC is considered an external quality assurance agency whereas the DGHE provides supports in internal quality assurance.

A summary of the quality assurance mechanisms is noted below.

Table 2: Summary of Quality Assurance

Responsible for…	Approval (initial) of HEIs to operate	Monitoring of HEIs	Approval of programmes of study	Approval to deliver programmes of study	Monitoring programmes of study
Legislation/ regulation etc	1) Royal Kram/Act NS/RKM/1207/032, 2007, promulgating the Law on Education 2) Royal Decree NS/PKT/0303/129, 2003, Accreditation of Higher Education. (Provision of Institutional Accreditation to of HEIs is legislated through Royal Decree No. 0303/129, 2003, on the Accreditation of Higher Education) 3) Sub-Decree No. 54, 2002, on Criteria of University Establishment. (Universities or Institutes is established through a sub decree No 54 of 13 June 2002 applying for both public and private HEIs. 4) PRAKAS [Regulation] No. 1435, 2007, on Conditions and the Details Criteria for establishment Higher Education Institutions. (NB: This applies for both public and private HEIs.)				
Public HEIs	Internal through the DGHE, MoEYS External - After establishment and operating as a HEI, then ACC undertakes external (i.e. assessment on foundation year programme)	Internal through the DGHE as internal monitoring for internal quality improvement through inspection activities, providing resources, and issuing policy actions, etc., External - Only in the condition of self-assessment report submission by HEIs, then ACC undertakes external assessment for quality control, giving consideration to provide accreditation or not to HEIs.	Internal through DGHE, MoEYS, who evaluates and assesses documents for licensing/ approving new programs by levels in higher education. This is the internal quality assurance mechanism before permit HEI to operate the new courses of study. Unless HEIs has licencing to operate, the HEI cannot recruit students to study.	Internal through DGHE and HEIs	Internal through DGHE and HEIs
Other HEIs / Private Education	The same as public HEIs (see above)	The same as public HEIs (see above)	The same as public HEIs (see above)	Internal through DGHE and	Internal through DGHE and

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Responsible for…	Approval (initial) of HEIs to operate	Monitoring of HEIs	Approval of programmes of study	Approval to deliver programmes of study	Monitoring programmes of study
Institutions (PEIs)				HEIs	HEIs

Role of the ACC

The main functions of the ACC are to:

- Establish accreditation policies and measures to assure academic quality of all HEIs

- Provide the accreditation status of HEIs.

Accreditation processes are still in the pilot stage and full implementation is expected in 2018. It is not clear at this stage if accreditation reports will be made public. There were 11 HEIs reviewed in 2015, 38 HEIs reviewed in 2016 and 5 HEIs currently completed in 2017. A synthesis report of findings is provided to the MOEYS.

The Royal decree indicates that the ACC shall determine the minimum standards for all higher education institutions but is to include reference to: mission; governing structure, management and planning; academic programmes; teaching staff; students and student services; learning services; physical facilities; financial planning and management; and dissemination of information.

The ACC established the National Standards for Accreditation of Higher Education in 2009 and revised in 2015. A summary is listed below.

Table 4: Summary of National Standards

No.	Standards	Main Purposes/Requirements
1	**Vision, Missions and Goals** (3 indicators)	HEI clearly defines its vision, mission and educational goals.
2	**Governance and Management** (6 indicators)	HEI has a good governance and management system.
3	**Academic Staff** (11 indicators)	HEI has adequate and competent academic staff both teaching and supporting staff.
4	**Academic Programme** (7 indicators)	HEI achieves and maintains the quality of its academic programmes.
5	**Student Service** (13 indicators)	HEI provides good quality of student services that contributes to their cultural, social, moral, intellectual, and physical development.
6	**Learning Resources** (14 indicators)	HEI's learning resources and services are adequate and appropriate for the degree programmes offered.
7	**Physical Resources** (6 indicators)	HEI has a physical capacity to serve its mission, academic programmes and activities.
8	**Financial Resources**	HEI has financial stability to accomplish its mission and to ensure the sustainability of its operation, academic

No.	Standards	Main Purposes/Requirements
	(7 indicators)	programs and services.
9	**Internal Quality Assurance** (6 indicators)	HEI is committed to continuous quality improvement

Accreditation of providers

To gain accreditation the HEIs need to fulfil the requirements of the 9 Standards. Accreditation is focussed on institutional accreditation and the ACC has not implemented programme accreditation at this stage. However, when a new HEI is accredited, ACC checks that there are processes in place to develop their own curriculum. ACC monitors how HEIs have developed and implemented their curriculum during their monitoring visits, calling in expertise in specific industry areas when required. This is especially the case in relation to Standards 4, 6 and 7.

The basis of the accreditation process is outlined in the following table.

Table 5: Approach to Accreditation

Objectives	Continuous quality improvement
	Focus on the output (student employability)
	Diagnostic assessment
	Informed information (for HEIs and public)
Methods	Standard/evidence-based approach
	External assessment team (independent local and regional assessors)
	Self-assessment reports and document analysis
	Site visit and Exit meeting
	Rating Scale (1-5)
	Recommendations
	Consultation with the assessed HEI on findings before submitting the report to ACC
	Committee
	Assessment Report is publicized
	Grievance mechanism
	Midterm Review
Scope	Accreditation is compulsory
	Institutional Level
	Both Public and Private HEIs
	Main and Branches of same HEI will be assessed separately, but will receive combined result with average score and detail score for each branch.
Accreditation Status	Full Accreditation (5 years with a midterm review)
	Provisional Accreditation (3 years)

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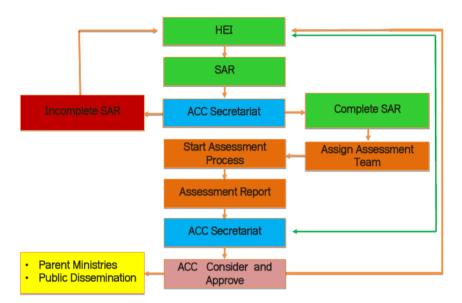|	Candidacy Status (2 years)

The process is as follows:

Figure 1: Process of accreditation

HEIs are informed in the process through:

- National Standards for Accreditation of HEIs

- Guidelines for Accreditation Process

Accreditation is for five years. The ACC does not maintain a public register.

ACC will develop standards for programmes in Engineering, Accounting, Medicine and Teaching. ACC will be responsible for the accreditation of these programmes. ACC recently developed standards for doctoral programmes.

Monitoring of accredited providers

The quality assurance monitoring arrangements of providers is the responsibility of ACC, although the DGHE does monitor providers under their remit to provide assistance and support if required (refer below).

The quality of provision (including currency of programs) is monitored through mid-term reviews and HEI progressive reports. ACC forms assessment teams to conduct the midterm review every 3 years on those HEIs that have full accreditation status. Those that have provisional and candidate accreditation status have to submit self-assessment reports for reassessment within 2-3-year terms.

Role of the DGHE

Approval and monitoring of programmes and providers

Approval of programmes is linked to the license or approval to operate processes undertaken by the DGHE. Approval to licence rests under Sub-decree 54/2002 on criteria for establishment of a university. Applications are evaluated against the *National Standards for accreditation of Higher Education Institutions*, which HEIs must meet to gain and maintain a licence to operate.

For programme approval, curriculum is checked against Standard 4 of the National Standards, and specifically are checked against the NQF, that it is learning outcomes based, that credit allocations and pathways are accurate. The DGHE includes other relevant Ministries in the review of programmes.

By education law, the MoEYS is responsible for determining a detailed framework of curriculum for implementation at all educational levels of Cambodian education system, including higher education. Education law does not allow DGHE to control the quality of curriculum on education on religious scriptures, technical education, education of military strategy and national security, education on the management of territorial administration, education provided by Royal School of Administration and technical and professional education for the courts offered by the training institution of legal and court Professions. Of the 16 HEIs that are the responsibility of other ministries (such as the Ministries of Labour, Religion, Army and Police), DGHE works with these HEIs, monitoring the quality of curriculum. HEIs apply for licensing approval under the nine conditions and are assessed against their capacity to meet these conditions. The private HEIs pay a licensing fee and are funded through student fees. Public HEIs do not pay a licensing fee. The Ministry of Finance provides a budget for public HEIs, based on budget plans submitted by HEIs to the relevant Ministry.

DGHE has a continuous improvement focus, supporting HEIs to plan for licensing and to prepare for ACC external assessment activities. DGHE also check how the HEIs are implementing the opportunities for improvement identified by ACC during the mid-term assessment visits.

Sixty of the private HEIs are inspected twice a year by DGHE, with an emphasis on identifying opportunities for continuous improvement. Where the HEIs do not fully meet DGHE requirements, DGHE assists them to strengthen their systems, building on research conducted by the Department. Private HEIs are required to undergo further assessment where they plan to add delivery sites and curriculum to their operations.

It is only recently that the DGHE has allowed HEIs to confer degrees and the Ministry of Education is no longer required to sign degrees.

The DGHE has a list of licensed HEIs that they are responsible for, but this is not made public.

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Internal quality assurance

Standard 9 of the National Standards for Accreditation of Higher Education requires all HEIs to implement internal quality assurance strategies. This is reviewed as part of the ACC's accreditation processes. DGHE does not mandate how the HEIs are to satisfy the six indicators of Standard 9; instead HEIs develop internal quality assurance guidelines that suit the operations and context of the institution. The DGHE considers that their role is to model IQA practices to HEIs and suggests that HEIs have a Director of QA supported by a QA team. Generally speaking, they follow AUN-QA processes and guidelines.

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Indonesia

Overview of NQF

Indonesia's national qualifications framework was established through a presidential decree in 2012 (Presidential Decree Number 8 Year 2012). The decree stipulates that the National Qualifications Framework is 'a framework of competency qualification levelling which corresponds, equalize and incorporate education fields with work training fields and work experience in order to provide work competency recognition according to the work structure in various sectors' (p. 1). The decree is supported in higher education by a range of documents as noted below.

Table 1: Legislative basis

Status	Legislated and described	Other
Basis of NQF	Presidential Decree 8/2012	Higher Education Law 12/2012 Ministerial Regulation 73/2013 Ministerial Regulation 49/2014

The decree outlines the level framework and promotes the use of learning outcomes. A summary of the framework is outlined below.

Table 2: Summary of the NQF

Item	Level of implementation
Levels	9
Level descriptors	Yes
Qualification types titles specified	Some listing of titles, but included in Law 12/2012
Qualification types descriptors	Not specified
Control of qualification titles and types	Yes, in supporting documentation
Volume of learning or credit value	Yes, in supporting documentation
Qualification pathways	Not specified but is an underlying principle of the decree
Credit transfer system	No, but credit points specified in supporting documentation
Documentation of NQF	Presidential decree plus supporting documentation
Website	No dedicated website as yet.

Overview of the qualifications system

The Indonesian qualifications systems is managed through three main ministries: Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Manpower, and Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education. In addition, the Department of Religious Affairs manages public Islamic institutions and private Islamic schools that follow its own regulations. Various institutions are also managed by each sector or professional field ministry or regulating body relevant to the institutions' authorities.

Overview of Quality Assurance

Summary of Quality Assurance

The national education system is promulgated though Act 20/2003. Other relevant legislation is:

- Government Regulation No. 19/2005 - National Standards on Education
- Minister of National Education Regulation No. 28/2005 - National Accreditation Agency for Higher Education
- Government Regulation No. 17/2010 - Management and Organization of Education
- Presidential Regulation No. 8/2012 - Indonesian National Qualification Framework

Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 59/2012 – National Accreditation Agencies.[27]

The quality assurance of higher education is bound by Act 12/2012, supported by the following:

- Government Regulation No. 32/2013 - Amendment to Government Regulation No.19/2005
- Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 73/2013 - Implementation of Indonesian Qualification Framework
- Government Regulation No. 4/2014 - Organization of Higher Education and Management of Higher Education Institution
- Minister of Research, Technology and Higher Education Regulation No. 44/2015 - National Standards on Higher Education
- Minister of Research, Technology and Higher Education Regulation No. 32/2016 - Accreditation of Study Program and Higher Education Institution
- Minister of Research, Technology and Higher Education Regulation No. 62/2016 - Quality Assurance System in Higher Education.[28]

The Higher Education Act 8/2012 places the responsibility for approval of providers and programmes to Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi (BAN-PT), the National Accreditation Agency for Higher Education. Essentially the accreditation process is to 'determine the feasibility of Study Programs and Higher Education Institutions based on the criteria that refer to the National Standards of Higher Education' (p. 28). BAN-PT is an agency operating within the Ministry responsible for higher education.

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[27] Sasongko 2017
[28] Sasongko 2017

Table 3: Summary of Quality Assurance

Responsible for…	Approval (initial) of HEIs to operate	Monitoring of HEIs	Approval of programmes of study	Approval to delivery programmes of study	Monitoring programmes of study
Legislation/ regulation etc	As noted above				
Public HEIs (and/or self-accrediting HEIs)	External/ Internal BAN-PT	External /Internal BAN-PT	External/ Internal BAN-PT	External/ Internal BAN-PT	External/ Internal BAN-PT
Other HEIs / Private Education Institutions (PEIs)	External BAN-PT	External BAN-PT	External BAN-PT LAM-PTKes	External BAN-PT LAM-PT Kes	External BAN-PT LAM-PT Kes

*LAM PT Kes = independent Accreditation Board for Health

The Ministerial Regulation 44/2015 on the National Standards of Higher Education is the reference point for quality assurance for higher education in Indonesia. The National Standards of Higher Education includes the National Education Standards, plus the National Research Standards, and the National Standards Community Service. The National Education Standards are the minimum criteria of learning in higher education at universities, the National Research Standards are the minimum criteria of the research system in universities, and the National Community Service Standards are the minimum criteria of the system of community service in universities.

Approval of programmes and providers

To support the development of consistent discipline-specific programmes across providers, Higher Education Regulation 49/2014 assigns responsibility to the Directorate of General of Higher Education for the development and approval of specific nationally agreed discipline-specific learning standards (referred to as graduate competencies). As of July 2017, there are 125 nationally agreed discipline-specific standards.

Since 2012, Higher Education Act 12/2012, the quality assurance system has moved from voluntary to compulsory accreditation. Accreditation includes both institution and programme level. BAN-PT was the sole accrediting agency for higher education, however this has changed to BAN-PT now undertaking institutional accreditation while the accreditation of programmes is done by specific, so-called programme accreditation agencies for higher education. These agencies will report to BAN-PT. As of July 2017, there was only one such agency (working on health) running, with another related to engineering being established.

Monitoring of providers and programmes

EQA has taken the form of a summative assessment every five years, and includes both a desk review and a site assessment.

Although the new structures require the EQAA to evaluate the IQA process, a revised EQA template (though BAN-PT) has not been developed to implement this process. EQA will be on a 5-year cycle, but there is also a requirement to monitor and evaluate all or some of the HEIs. It is unclear how this will be done and how often. There are early discussions in relation to budget, but it is envisioned that BAN-PT will use the national database of data to provide a dashboard for HEIs.

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The data dictionary (standard) allows for 4,500+ institutions to collect data. Data may not be complete or clean, but there is no requirement to submit data. However, institutions can use this data for their own review purposes.

Internal quality assurance

The National Standards for Higher Education (2015 revised) requires institutions to implement internal quality assurance (IQA), obliging them to have their own standard and implement it. They are required to implement IQA annually (using an ADRI cycle) as a process for continuous improvement. IQA is seen to be a mirror of the EQA process and the findings/actions are evaluated as part of the EQA process.

References

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Lao PDR

Overview of NQF

Laos has not confirmed or endorsed an NQF at this stage (August 2017). However, the proposed NQF is to address both TVET and higher education sectors. It is proposed that the NQF will be an 8-level framework with the level descriptors based on the following domains: Knowledge, Skills, Application, and Social competences. The NQF will identify qualification types on the 8 levels.

It will also include a volume of learning measure. Volume of learning measure will be based on student workload, such as lecture, seminar, practice, self-learning, survey/research, internship, studying for exam.

The proposal also notes that the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) will be responsible for implementing, defining learning outcomes, reviewing institute programmes to align with the NQF, coordinating with other ministries, and monitoring and evaluation. Other ministries will be responsible for reviewing programmes under their remit, and institutions are to review their programmes to meet both NQF and labour market needs.

Overview of the qualifications system

The higher education system within Laos includes:

- 5 Universities (Ministry of Public Health 1, Ministry of Education 4)
- 4 Academies (related to defence, police, army, politics, public institute)
- 122 Colleges (comprising 10 teacher colleges, 22 TVET colleges, 70 private colleges, 20 colleges under other ministries), that cannot issue degrees
- 4 Institutes (related to banking institute, finance institute, Bank of Laos and Ministry of Finance), that can issue degrees.

Not all these institutions fall under the remit of MoES.

Overview of Quality Assurance

Summary of Quality Assurance

Quality assurance of higher education in Lao PDR is a shared obligation, but with the responsibility resting with the Ministry of Education and Sports. The Education Quality Assurance Centre (EQAC), under the MOES, has taken a major role in moving forward internal and external quality assurance arrangements in Laos. EQAC was established in 2008 to provide quality assurance services for those providers under the remit of the Education Law.

A summary of the quality assurance mechanisms is noted below.

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Table 1: Summary of Quality Assurance

Responsible for…	Approval (initial) of HEIs to operate	Monitoring of HEIs	Approval of programmes of study	Approval to deliver programmes of study	Monitoring programmes of study
Legislation/ regulation etc	Education Law (v3) 2015 Higher Education Decree 2015				
Public HEIs	MoES Line ministry (if relevant)	MoES (EQAC)	MoES	MoES	Internal
Private Education Institutions (PEIs)	Ministry of Commerce and Industries (license)	EQAC	MoES	MoES	Internal

Approval of programmes

Approval of programmes is the remit of the MoES. Higher education of all types and forms are to have their curriculum and plans approved by MoES. There is no accreditation period for qualifications, nor a review cycle required. However, the principle of evaluation requires that each programme be evaluated every four years after approval; but this not implemented consistently.

Curriculum design at this stage is not required to be based on learning outcomes, and most curricula are still subject knowledge-based. However, the proposed NQF will require a learning-outcome -focus for qualifications under the framework.

There is no public register of approved qualifications.

Approval of providers

Approval of providers falls under the remit of the Minister of Education and Sports, or other Ministers if relevant. In addition, for private institutions, they can seek a license as a company for the purposes of education through the Ministry of Commerce and Industries. The Ministry of Commerce and Industries provide the license as an enterprise to make the institution a legal body, however, the institutions have to seek the approval to operate from MoES.

At this stage there are no agreed quality standards for the establishment of education providers. However, under the Higher Education Decree 2015, the Minister of Education and Sports is to 'cooperate with the concerned central and local organizations to set detailed regulations for management and administration; and standards and conditions of each type of higher education institution'.

Under the Higher Education Decree 2015, local and international private institutions, international institutions or international organizations and all types of regional, national, provincial and specialized institutions are managed by MOES. The requirements for establishment include:

- Having the detailed infrastructure plan and relevant documents from the concerned government organizations to warrant the investment
- Having the certification of financial capability
- Having the capability to finish the construction of the compound, and having basic technical equipment installed within five years after obtaining the official approval from the government or the concerned government organizations.

In addition, higher education institutions of all types and forms are to meet the following requirements to be able to deliver degree and above programmes:

- Aligned the programme to meet socio-economic needs
- Have sufficient personnel and academic and research staff for the programmes
- Have sufficient infrastructure, classroom buildings, laboratories, libraries, equipment, and teaching materials
- Have curriculum and plans approved by MOES.

Most reviews of applications for a new institution are based on a desk review of documents, however the Department of Higher Education may visit the institute and write a report to the Minister for approval decision.

In 2016, a set of minimum quality standards were proposed, however they have not been approved as yet. These minimum standards for establishment address input requirements, such as physical resources, human resources, financial resources, etc.

There is no public register of approved institutions.

Monitoring of providers and programmes

EQAC provides the external quality assurance of higher education institutions. Institution standards have been developed for EQA and IQA for HEIs (2013). There are ten standards:

1. Mission, vision, goals
2. Management
3. Human resources development
4. Program/Curriculum
5. Teaching and learning effectiveness
6. Learner support
7. Environment and Learning resources
8. Information systems
9. QA system
10. Research and social services.

Currently, higher education institutes are to complete the self-assessment report prior to an EQA site visit. In doing so, institutes have to describe, and mention the level of implementation, to respond to standards, to analyse and to provide a SWAT analysis and development plan.

The findings of the EQA rates the implementation of quality assurance on a 5-point scale. However, the focus of the review is on the institute, and no focus or standards on the programme review.

EQAC has undertaken training of assessors and pilots have been conducted. In 2016, EQA was conducted with 24 institutes. In 2017, EQAC conducted EQA for all the 8 teacher training colleges.

At this point in time, EQAC can only report on the findings, and there is no impact on accreditation of the institute. There is no legal remit for the EQA other than what is mentioned in the Higher Education Decree 2015. However, the Quality Accreditation Committee has been discussed to set up under chairperson of Minister of Education.

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Internal quality assurance

The Higher Education Decree 2015 notes that it is a requirement for higher education institutions of all types and forms to have a 'quality assurance organization and network in their institutions to assure the quality of education in their institutions'. This unit is to 'be independent in terms of academic management' and is to be 'under the guidance of the boards of directors of the institutions'.

The Decree also states that higher education institutions have the following responsibilities:

1. 'Create internal quality assurance system, perform the inspection and evaluation using the standards set by the Ministry of Education and Sports;
2. Produce information documents and reports on quality assurance to inform the concerned government organizations;
3. Be accountable to and accept the results of the evaluation of their institutions conducted by external quality assurance organizations;
4. Plan, set timetable, and register to perform quality assurance procedures in higher education institutions;
5. Disseminate and make public the results of the quality assurance evaluation through various media;
6. Improve the quality of the institutions using the results from the evaluation;
7. Lodge complaints against or handle as seen appropriate, government organizations, individuals, or groups of people who wrongfully accuse or criticize, and distort the truth of quality assurance of their institutions.'

Although these requirements are relatively recent, some universities have set up quality assurance units within the organisation, some have undertaken a self-assessment, and they are participating in local fora on quality assurance.

However, it has been difficult for institutes to take an overarching approach to IQA; they tend to plan for the self-assessment report as isolated activity. The self-assessment report includes: background, process of self-assessment, summarise whole institute findings, advantages, and barriers.

References

Education Law (v3) 2015

Higher Education Decree 2015

Minimum Standards of Higher Education Institutions (2013)

Malaysia

Overview of NQF

The Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) was issued under the authority of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007 (Act 679). The framework covers three sectors (skills, vocational and technical, and academic). The framework is under review, but the current version is summarised below.

Table 1: Summary of the NQF

Item	Level of implementation
Levels	8
Level descriptors	Yes
Qualification types titles specified	Broadly, yes
Qualification types descriptors	Yes
Control of qualification titles and types	Yes. All qualifications are approved and listed. Any changes to these qualifications requires re-approval including removal of a qualification.
Volume of learning or credit value	All levels require a predetermined minimum number of credits. One credit equals 40 notional hours of learning.
Qualification pathways	Pathways are specified in the framework including for lifelong learners
Credit transfer system	Credit transfer is permitted between programmes and also between some levels in the MQF subject to rules set by the MQA.
Documentation of NQF	There is a single document.
Website	The NQF information is contained on the MQA website.

The MQF is described in a single document but must be read in conjunction with the standards and criteria, and the policies to fully appreciate the quality assurance mechanisms for qualifications.

Overview of the qualifications system

There are a range of providers within the higher education sector.

1. Public universities are established under the Universities and University Colleges Act 1972. There are 20 HEIs that are mainly publicly funded and operate under oversight of the Ministry of Higher Education.
2. Private universities and university colleges are established under the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996. There are 76 HEIs licensed and established under this act.
3. Private colleges are also licensed and established under the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996. These colleges are not permitted to award bachelor degrees.
4. International branch campuses are recognised as branch campuses of foreign universities and are regulated by Ministry of Higher Education and MQA, professional bodies, and in some cases by the QA bodies in the home country.
5. Government institutions, generally Polytechnics, community colleges and a range of other certification and training centres of other ministries (e.g. Teacher Training Colleges).

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Overview of Quality Assurance

Summary of Quality Assurance

The responsibility for various quality assurance functions in the higher education sector is shared by:

- The Higher Education Department, Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE);
- The Department of Skills Development, Ministry of Human Resources; and
- The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA).

Table 2: Summary of Quality Assurance

Responsible for…	Approval (initial) of HEIs to operate	Monitoring of HEIs	Approval of programmes of study	Approval to deliver programmes of study	Monitoring programmes of study
Legislation/ regulation	- Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007 (Act 679) - Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996 (Act 555) - Universities and University Colleges Act 1971				
Public HEIs and/or other HEIs	External	External	External	External	External
Self-accrediting HEIs	External HEIs can have self-accrediting status conferred on them by the MQA.	Internal External Are subject to periodic institutional audits by MQA.	Internal External Are subject to periodic programme audits by MQA.	Internal External Are subject to periodic programme audits by MQA.	Internal External Are responsible for periodic programme reviews.

Approval of programmes

Responsible bodies include:

- The Registrar General (Director General of Higher Education) approves programmes to be offered by private HEIs, with decisions being valid for a period of five years.
- University programmes are approved by Minister of Higher Education.
- In approving a new programme, MQA's provisional accreditation is required and further renewals require full accreditation.
- For professional programmes, approval from the professional bodies is required before MQA and the Department of Higher Education can accredit and approve the programme respectively. Professional bodies approve programmes under the authority of their own acts and are recognised under the MQA Act, but a Joint Technical Committee with MQA participation is required to select panels, set standards, receive and review reports and make recommendations to their boards.

Private and public HEIs submit the proposed programmes to the MQA, which then undergo an expert panel evaluation to check that the programmes are consistent with programme standards, the National Qualifications Framework and relevant policies. The eventual decision is taken by two accreditation committees. These accreditation committees, which represent five major areas of study, have the authority through the MQA under the Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007 to make decisions regarding the accreditation of programmes and qualifications.

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Until recently, private HEIs and public university programmes were pre-screened to determine if they fulfil industry needs and if the programmes are consistent with national plans. The pre-screening of programmes has been removed for private HEIs and only undergraduate programmes at public universities are subject to pre-screening by the MoHE.

Professional bodies approve programmes under the authority of their own Acts and programmes are recognised under the MQA Act 2007.

For some programmes, there is a site visit for provisional programme accreditation to check facilities but this is no formal requirement and determined on a case-by-case basis, particularly where physical facilities are required for the delivery of the programme at the outset. Where institutions are known to have high standard facilities, a visit may not be made; conversely, where issues have been raised about other institutions' facilities in the past, a site visit is more likely.

For some professional bodies, a site visit is mandatory, e.g. for dentistry and medicine. The professional bodies use assessors on the MQA approved assessors list to carry out these review visits. The professional body advises MQA of the outcome of the assessment and the MQA typically accepts this recommendation. The Act permits appeals to the Minister of Higher Education and, in the case of professional programmes, to an appellate committee, if the HEI is aggrieved with any accreditation decisions.

Programmes are initially given provisional approval and, when the first student cohort is in the programme's final year of study, the HEI in question submits a self-review portfolio to the MQA. This is the beginning of the full accreditation process. The MQA then reviews delivery and assessment, checks that all required resources are in place and that they have been evaluated, and student outcomes are assessed. Where programmes do not meet the required standard, HEIs are given the opportunity to review their programmes and re-submit them to the MQA. Once programmes are approved they are listed on the Malaysian Qualifications Register as an accredited programme.

Some HEIs can self-accredit programmes, a privilege that is granted after a comprehensive institutional review shows a mature and robust IQA system. These HEIs (only universities) must be in existence for at least ten years; have robust systems already in place; be rated at level five or equivalent in terms of teaching and learning; and have a good track record with the MQA in relation to their accreditation activity. These HEIs can internally accredit their programmes and submit the stipulated information to the MQA, which then carries out a cursory review of the program before listing it in the MQR. The HEIs submit bi-annual reports on provisional and fully accredited programmes, together with a summary of which programmes are approaching their five-year anniversaries. The MQA carries out a review of the self-accrediting HEI every five years.

Recently, one of a series of government initiatives relating to higher education is to allow public HEIs to operate more autonomously. Fully funded undergraduate degrees will continue to be closely scrutinised, while postgraduate programmes and facilities will receive less scrutiny as MQF level 7 and 8 programmes are generally not fully publicly funded.

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Programme standards

The Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation (2008) identifies the generic minimum requirements in nine areas of evaluation for programmes to be accredited. A revised code is to be implemented in 2018 which will merge the nine areas into seven, thereby simplifying and enhancing the catalogue of standards.

The discipline-based programme standards developed through the MQA describe the minimum generic requirements for the delivery of an accredited programme. They embrace all levels of the MQF and are designed to assist HEIs to meet the Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation, for instance in relation to outcomes, resources, design and delivery, monitoring and review.

There are currently 22 discipline-specific programme standards and several more in development. The discipline programme standards were developed in courses of study where there are high numbers of programmes and in response to demand from industry. The discipline standards are developed by panel members with input from industry and go through comprehensive consultation, validation and testing processes, usually over a period of twelve months. These standards are reviewed every five years or sooner if need be.

The MQF guides the development of programme standards, emphasising the use of learning outcomes. The MQF provides generic descriptors while the programme standards describe the details specific to the discipline such as core knowledge, specialisation requirements, durations, and the content of the body of knowledge.

The MQA has an expert panel pool of approximately 1,700 trained assessors from different disciplines, including industry representatives who can be called on to consider accreditation applications and conduct reviews.

Approval of providers

Responsible bodies include:

- The Ministry of Higher Education via the Department of Higher Education approves the establishment of private HEIs pursuant to the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act (Act 555) and the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971.
- The Department of Skills Development approves providers under the National Skills Development Act 2006 (Act 652).

Private and public higher education institutions seeking approval to operate in Malaysia submit proposals to the Department of Higher Education, which determines if the agencies meet the requirements of the relevant quality standards, guidelines and policies. Private HEIs are required, under their Act, to establish companies and to meet requirements including those relating to capital, equity and the educational background of its employees. In seeking to establish an HEI, these companies apply for a licence to operate as a college or a university college, categories that are defined in the Act. The category of the HEI determines the scope of the programmes the HEI is authorised to offer. After the licence is granted, private HEIs are able to apply for approval to deliver programmes.

Presently, there is a moratorium on the establishment of new HEIs; instead the focus is on upgrading existing colleges.

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The Ministry of Finance also regulates public HEIs and intensively monitors their financial management. The Ministry is presently moving towards an outcomes-based analysis of financial management.

Monitoring of providers and programs

The Ministry of Higher Education, MQA, the Department of Skills Development, all professional bodies, and the Ministry of Finance are responsible for monitoring the providers and programmes.

MQA typically conducts a series of visits after initial accreditation. These occur before students commence; as monitoring visits within the next five years and at the end of five years, when there is a review. Some aspects of the five-year review are institutional, where governance, internal quality assurance systems, monitoring and review processes are reviewed. Other aspects of the review are specific to the curriculum, for example resources, specialist and faculty expertise are evaluated. If the HEI is not performing to the required standard it undertakes to rectify outstanding issues within an agreed timeframe, which is usually three to six months. This usually necessitates a review of evidence and can involve a site visit.

If serious failures by an institution are identified through monitoring activity accreditation can be withdrawn and the HEI cannot advertise its programmes. At times the Ministry enforcement group carries out an investigation of HEIs and if an HEI's performance is particularly poor, the Ministry can either withdraw the approval of the programme or even cancel the HEI's licence.

For HEIs that work on the basis of self-accreditation, MQA undertakes a review every five years.

In the skills sector, the Department of Skills Development approves providers and the skills programme to be delivered, and assesses and certifies the trainees for attainment of the specified competencies.

Internal quality assurance

Both codes of practice (MQA 2008, MQA 2009) require HEIs to have in place a system for the internal review of programmes. The review must be cyclical, systematic and carried out at reasonable intervals. The effectiveness of the internal review is checked during the MQA external review. The focus of this evaluation is the extent to which the internal review has assisted the HEI to identify improvements and to increase the capacity of the institution to embed quality assurance. The measures used for internal quality assurance are also evaluated, for example the capacity of staff; the processes followed; and responses to the outcomes of the review. Importantly, there is an increasing focus on the extent to which the institution's priorities are shifting in a recognition of the fact that quality assurance has intrinsic value rather than just being an administrative burden.

There is also a range of good practice guidelines in place to assist HEIs to enhance their performance as well as to assist them with adherence to the two codes of practice (MQA 2008, MQA 2009). A series of Guidelines to Good Practices have been developed to address aspects of quality such as teaching and learning, staff development and assessment. These can be sourced at: http://www2.mqa.gov.my/QAD/ . In addition, MQA also provides a series of Advisory Notes focusing on specific issues that have been faced or raised by the HEIs. These notes provide guidance for compliance and also enhancement of specific academic practices.

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Malaysian Qualifications Agency 2009, *Code of Practice for Institutional Audit*, Malaysia, accessed 15 May 2017 at http://www2.mqa.gov.my/QAD/garispanduan/COPIA/COPIA%202nd%20Edition.pdf.

Myanmar

Overview of NQF

Myanmar (as of June 2017) is finalising its national qualifications framework. The structure has been determined, however, it has not been decided how best for it to be established (e.g. legislation, decree). The objectives of the Myanmar National Qualifications Framework (MNQF) (NQA/QA Working Group, Department of Higher Education 2016) are:

1. To reinforce policies on quality assurance and setting the standards and learning outcomes of qualifications
2. To make qualifications transparent and comparable within and across national borders and to be recognized by the international community
3. To support mobility of learners and employees by creating a credit transfer system and competency standards
4. To make qualifications more responsive to individual and employer needs, more relevant to industry needs, and more trusted by the community
5. To support flexible education by providing a choice of educational pathways including recognising prior learning
6. To link certificates and diplomas with undergraduate and postgraduate degree level education
7. To encourage people to view academic and vocational qualifications as equally valid
8. To improve opportunities for validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning
9. To raise the capacity and capability of human resources aiming to become responsible citizens in the country.[29]

The NQF is an 8-level framework, with three domains (knowledge and skills, application and competency, responsibility). The framework links the three education sectors (basic education, TVET, Higher education) and links with lifelong learning through recognition of prior learning.

Table 1: Proposed NQF

Level	Basic Education	TVET	Higher Education	Lifelong learning
8			Postdoctoral studies/Doctoral degrees	Recognition of prior learning (assessment and validation) Informal/Non-formal learning
7			Master degree	
6			Post graduate diploma, Bachelor degree	
5		Advanced Diploma		
4		Diploma/V&TC/SC4		
3	High school	V&TC/SC3		
2	Middle school	V&TC/SC2		
1	Primary school	V&TC/SC1		

Note: V&TC = Vocational and Technical Certificates/Skills Certificates. Source: MNQF) (NQA/QA Working Group, Department of Higher Education 2016

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[29] Myanmar National Qualifications Framework (MNQF) (NQA/QA Working Group, Department of Higher Education 2016

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The National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which will include qualification descriptors with credit points at qualifications level, is under development and there is no plan for its implementation in place yet. Presently there are no clear plans as how to link the NQF with a quality assurance system. A summary of implementation is outlined below.

Table 2: Summary of the NQF

Item	Level of implementation
Levels	8
Level descriptors	Yes
Qualification types titles specified	Yes
Qualification types descriptors	Non-discipline specific to be developed
Control of qualification titles and types	Not as yet
Volume of learning or credit value	Length of a cycle is considered. But credit value has to be added.
Qualification pathways	Not specified
Credit transfer system	No system has been developed.
Documentation of NQF	One document, at this stage
Website	Dedicated NQF website to be established

Overview of the qualifications system

Myanmar's education system was previously based on 11 years of schooling, but has recently added two levels to its basic education system (kindergarten and year 12). It is envisaged that the new structure will be fully implemented within ten years.

There are over 40,000 schools and 133 HEIs in Myanmar under the authority of the Ministry of Education, with additional HEIs under the responsibility of other ministries, such as the Ministry of Health and Agriculture. HEIs are classified as either universities, colleges or technical colleges.

The registration of HEIs is legislated under the National Education Law 2014 (amended in 2015) and the standards for registration are under development.

The National Education Policy Commission (NEPC) has legislated responsibilities for setting national education objectives and policy; for founding a national curriculum committee and national quality assurance committee. It will evaluate the higher education system and develop policy and guidance to assist the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee (NAQAC) in developing criteria and standards for quality assurance. The Commission will also coordinate with the government and regional administration for financial assistance for educational institutions, coordinate with international bodies to provide financial assistance to educational institutions, coordinate international education aid, coordinate education projects, evaluate the education and training system and establish policies. The Commission will also set policies for opening and closing HEIs and schools, and will report to parliament every six months.

Under development currently are:

- Private Education Law
- TVET Law
- Higher Education Law
- Basic Education Law

Under the National Education Policy Commission are located:

- National Curriculum Committee (NCC): Responsible for kindergarten to year 12.
- National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee (NAQAC): Responsible for the accreditation processes (programme and institution) related to the NQF.

Overview of Quality Assurance

The National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee (NAQAC) will be responsible for the external quality assurance of the qualifications system.

NAQAC's functions, roles and responsibilities have been endorsed by the Chair of the National Education Policy Commission and include:

1. Using the NQF as the reference point when implementing quality assurance
2. Linking Myanmar's education system with international education systems, and develop credit points system
3. Undertaking the assessment of HEIs and programmes, including the TVET sector.
4. Developing the quality assurance systems for basic education
5. Benchmarking and classifying HEIs, accrediting institutions for up to five years.
6. Reporting to the National Education Policy Commission poor performance of institutions.
7. Developing quality assurance materials, conduct seminars on quality assurance.
8. Liaise with other quality assurance agencies internally and undertake research in the area of quality assurance
9. Provide for transparency to encourage trust in the system and ensure that functions are line with international standards
10. Enhance recognition of qualifications by liaising with transnational education agencies
11. Liaise internationally to promote the recognition of Myanmar qualifications internationally.

Summary of Quality Assurance

Currently, the remit of the Ministry of Education is the education sector which includes: distance education, arts and sciences, foreign languages, education and economics. However, other universities that are under their relevant ministries (13 ministries) will be brought together under the Ministry of Education. It is still unclear if the Department of Labour institutions will come also under the remit of the Ministry of Education.

The regulator of public and private institutions, i.e. those responsible for opening and closing institutions are:

- Ministry of Education
- Private Education Council.

The scope of the external quality assurance of NAQAC will be 132 HEIs plus the Military Academy, 60 TVET organisations (technical high schools and government technical institutions), and private institutions (approximately 100 HEIs and teaching centres).

NAQAC will inform the National Education Policy Commission about the performance of institutions, which in turn will provide advice to the Ministry (and to the Private Education Commission) about sanctions and closures. It is proposed that NAQAC will function according to the standards of AQAF for an EQAA.

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The table below summarises the proposed quality assurance arrangements.

Table 3: Summary of Quality Assurance

Responsible for…	Approval (initial) of HEIs to operate	Monitoring of HEIs	Approval of programmes of study	Approval to deliver programmes of study	Monitoring programmes of study
Legislation/ regulation etc	National Education Law (Enacted in 2014 and Amended in 2015)				
Public HEIs and/or Self-accrediting HEIs	External NAQAC Ministry of Education	External NAQAC Ministry of Education	External NAQAC Ministry of Education Professional Councils	External NAQAC Ministry of Education Professional Councils	External NAQAC Ministry of Education Professional Councils
Private HEIs	External NAQAC Private Education Council	External NAQAC Private Education Council	External NAQAC Private Education Council Professional Councils	External NAQAC Private Education Council Professional Councils	External NAQAC Private Education Council Professional Councils

Approval and monitoring of programmes and providers
All HEIs must be accredited according to the Education Law.

For the accreditation of institutions and programmes, NAQAC will coordinate with nine (existing) professional bodies (e.g. nursing, medicine, accountancy, engineering, and dentistry) to lower the regulatory burden of institutions. There are to be 9 quality standards (similar to MQA), due to be developed shortly for institution accreditation. For those institutions in TVET, it is proposed that the quality standards to be applied, will be the East Asia Standards TVET Quality Assurance Framework, that are included as supplementary information to the framework.

There will be three stages of institution accreditation (initial, provisional and full). Ranking of institutions against these criteria will affect funding.

It is not clear how programme accreditation will be undertaken, or the criteria or standards to be applied.

It is anticipated that there will be programme standards developed for nine priority areas, to provided consistency across institutions.

Maintaining a register of HIEs and their programmes will be part of the responsibility of NAQAC.

Monitoring of providers and programmes
NAQAC will have responsibility for monitoring the quality of HEIs and their programmes, against the nine proposed quality standards or EAS TVET Quality Assurance Framework.

HEIs will complete a self-assessment before NAQAC assessors conduct site visits, which will take five days for institutional assessment and three days for programme assessment. The assessment teams (two teams of three people), while led by NAQAC staff, will include academics and experts with specialist knowledge. At the end of the site visit the HEI will be briefed on preliminary findings. An assessment panel will review the final draft report and the finalised report will be submitted to the Commission.

NAQAC has trained some assessors and is developing an assessor register. Also, NAQAC has developed ethical standards for assessors.

Internal quality assurance

It is expected under the Education Law that institutions will have an IQA system. Some institutions are establishing IQA systems in line with international practice, whereas others are only just starting IQA practices. Some universities are using the AUN-QA criteria for internal programme approval.

Other developments

The NAQAC is surveying HEIs on how they currently quality assure their operations. Early findings are that while some HEIs are applying internal quality assurance systems, others require substantial professional development regarding the purpose, function and implementation of internal and external quality assurance systems. Further development will be required about the NQF and the referencing framework, implementing learning outcomes.

Universities and colleges are to move towards autonomy in five years, by the end of 2019. Autonomy is in relation to organisational, staffing, financial and academic areas. However, accreditation and external quality assurance will still be relevant for this cohort.

NAQAC has full government support to develop effective accreditation and quality assurance systems and expectations are high. Challenging goals have been set, with short timelines.

References

Myanmar National Qualifications Framework (MNQF) 2016, NQA/QA Working Group, Department of Higher Education.

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Philippines

Overview of NQF

The Philippine Qualifications Framework was established through Executive Order 83 in 2012. The following table summarises the legislative basis of the NQF.

Table 1: Basis for NQF

Status	Legislated and described (please name and date, URL)	Mentioned in legislation supported by a supplementary descriptive document (name and date, and URLs)	Other
Basis of NQF	Executive Order 83, series of 2012 (EO 83, s. 2012) http://www.gov.ph/2012/10/01/executive-order-no-83-s-2012/	This Order institutionalizes the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF), which is the national policy that defines educational qualifications and sets the standards for qualification outcomes within the Philippine education system.	Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) for EO 83 on December 17, 2012.
	Republic Act 10647, 2014 http://www.gov.ph/2014/11/21/republic-act-no-10647/	This Act aims to strengthen the interface between Technical-Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education," otherwise known as the 'Ladderized Education Act of 2014.'	This Act mentions the PQF and stipulates its governance structure.
	Republic Act 10968, 2018 http://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2018/01/16/republic-act-no-10968/	An Act institutionalizing the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) and establishing the PQF-National Coordinating Council	Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) is still to be formulated

The Executive Order 83 series 2012 provides for the institutionalization of the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) through the creation of the Philippine Qualifications Framework-National Coordinating Council (PQF-NCC). The PQF activities are being handled by the Council, chaired by the Department of Education (DepEd) Secretary with the heads of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) as members. While it is not a member, the PQF-NCC has coordinated closely with the Department of Trade and Industry.[30]

The member agencies of the PQF-NCC led the development of the PQF in consultation with major stakeholders: academe, industry, professional organizations; and are responsible for the implementation of the PQF.

The substantiation of the levels associated with technical programmes was done in coordination with the industry partners of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). The ongoing substantiation of programmes at Level 6 is done by CHED Technical Panels with representatives from, the academe professional associations and the Professional Regulations Board (for regulated disciplines, e.g. Engineering, Accountancy, Medicine) in consultation with industry partners for industry-oriented programmes.

The structure of the PQF has not changed since the Bateman and Coles (2016) report.

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[30] Source: 2015 PQF-NCC Year End Report

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Table 2: Summary of the NQF

Item	Level of implementation
Levels	8 (ongoing assessment of existing programmes vis-à-vis the levels)
Level descriptors	Yes
Qualification types titles specified	Yes
Qualification types descriptors	Yes, generic qualifications and not yet specific for the various disciplines
Control of qualification titles and types	To be formulated/established
Volume of learning or credit value	To be harmonized: Different for Basic Education (units), Technical Vocational (hours), and Higher education (units)
Qualification pathways	Still being developed
Credit transfer system	Still being developed
Documentation of NQF	Harmonizing across sectors towards the development of one document
Website	Currently being hosted at the TESDA website: http://www.tesda.gov.ph/ http://210.1.92.38/

The framework addresses all education sectors (basic, TVET and higher education).

Overview of the qualifications system

HEIs in the Philippines can be categorised as public and private:

- Public HEIs are further categorized into state universities and colleges (SUCs), local universities and colleges (LUCs), and other chartered or specialized government institutions (e.g. Philippine Military Academy).
- Private HEIs are either stock or non-stock institutions.

Overview of Quality Assurance

Summary of Quality Assurance

The public and private HEIs follow the same External Quality Assurance (EQA) processes except for the establishment of the institution. Public HEIs have to be created by law enacted at the national or by ordinance at the local level. Private HEIs seek the approval of CHED for their establishment.

A summary of the quality assurance arrangements is noted below.

Table 3: Summary of Quality Assurance

Responsible for…	Responsibility for approval (initial) of HEIs to operate	Responsibility for monitoring of HEIs	Responsibility for approval of programmes of study	Responsibility for approval to delivery programmes of study	Responsibility for monitoring programmes of study
Legislation/ regulation etc.	- Republic Act No. 7722, also known as the Higher Education Act of 1994. Establishment of the Commission on Higher Education - Manual of Regulations for Private Higher Education (MORPHE) [Note: This Manual is also applicable to Public HEIs in line with CMO No. 30, series 2009 entitled 'Applicability of the Manual of Regulations for Private Higher Education (MORPHE) of 2008 to State Universities and Colleges' (SUCs) and Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs)] - CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 32, series 2006 - Establishment of Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs) - Omnibus Rules, Regulations and Standards for the Creation of New State, City and Community Schools, Universities and Colleges and Conversion/Elevation				

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Responsible for…	Responsibility for approval (initial) of HEIs to operate	Responsibility for monitoring of HEIs	Responsibility for approval of programmes of study	Responsibility for approval to delivery programmes of study	Responsibility for monitoring programmes of study
	- CHED Memorandum Orders (CMOs) pertaining to the policies, standards, and guidelines (PSGs) for different degree programmes - Various Republic Acts on the Creation and Conversion/Elevation of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) - Chartered HEIs - Republic Act 8292 "Higher Education Modernization Act of 1997"-An Act Providing for Uniform Composition of Powers of Governing Boards, Manner of Appointment and Terms of Office of the President of Chartered State Universities and Colleges and for other purposes. - Corporation Code of the Philippines and Education Act of 1982 (Batas Pambansa Bilang 232) as amended by Republic Act No. 7798 on the establishment of private higher education institutions, either as anon-stock or as a stock educational corporation				
Public HEIs	External - Congress - Local Government Unit - CHED (for LUCs)	External - CHED	Internal - HEI's Governing Body (BOT/BOR) External - CHED	Internal - HEI's Governing Body (BOT/BOR) External - CHED	Internal- HEI's various offices/units External - CHED - CHED and Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) *for programmes covered by licensure examinations
Private HEIs	External - CHED	External - CHED	External - CHED	External - CHED	External - CHED - CHED and PRC *for programmes covered by licensure examinations

The establishment of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and the conversion of State Colleges into universities is vested in the Philippine Congress, although the laws promulgated in the last five years for such SUCs stipulate that these institutions meet CHED requirements for university status. Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs), which are created to address local needs, are established by Local Government Units with authorization from CHED. Incorporated either as non-stock or stock corporations in accordance with the Corporation Code of Philippines and Education Act of 1982 as amended by RA 7798, private HEIs, on the other hand, register with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) with favourable endorsement from CHED.

For programme operation, approval of SUC programme offerings is vested in their Governing Boards as provided for by Republic Act No. 8292. However, to obtain CHED recognition of such programmes, Certificates of SUC Program Compliance from the

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Commission is required. In the case of LUCs and private HEIs, government authorization from CHED is needed to operate programmes.

Republic Act No. 7722 enjoins public and private HEIs to comply with the minimum requirements prescribed by CHED for the operation of higher education programmes. Furthermore, regular and periodic monitoring and evaluation of the performance of HEIs and their programmes are primarily CHED's responsibility.

In view of the foregoing, the EQA agency in the Philippines is the aforementioned Commission on Higher Education (CHED). All HEIs follow the quality assurance standards of CHED and it is CHED that ensures HEI compliance with these standards in their operation and programme offerings.

However, there are associations of private and public HEIs that have created their own 'accrediting agencies'. 'Accreditation' by these external bodies—all of them CHED-recognized private accrediting bodies—is voluntary in nature on the part of the HEIs, meaning that it is not mandatory for all HEIs to undergo this 'voluntary accreditation' process. They still have authority from CHED to operate and offer degree programmes without undergoing this 'voluntary accreditation'. Accreditation by these accrediting bodies accordingly refers to the process of assessing and upgrading the educational quality of HEIs and programmes through self-evaluation and peer judgment that leads to the grant of different levels of accredited status.

The CHED-recognized accreditation bodies in the Philippines are organized into two networks. The first, the Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP) covers three agencies accrediting private HEIs, namely: the Philippine Association of Accredited Schools Colleges and Universities (PAASCU) founded in 1957 originally for Catholic institutions; the Association of Christian Schools Colleges and Universities Accreditation Agency (AACSCU-AA) founded in 1976 originally for non-Catholic Christian institutions; and the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA) founded in 1973 for non-sectarian HEIs. While originally serving particular types of HEIs, all three accrediting agencies are no longer restrictive in their membership.

The second aggrupation of accreditation bodies for public educational institutions is the National Network of Quality Assurance (NNQA). It is composed of the Association of Accredited Colleges and Universities of the Philippines (AACUP) founded in 1987 to accredit SUCs and the Association of Local Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (ALCUCOA) founded in 2003 to accredit LUCs.

The accrediting bodies under the FAAP and NNQA umbrellas are association of peers, with accredited HEIs as members. Over the last decade, CHED has begun to recognize accrediting bodies constituted by professional associations that accredit disciplinal programmes with international accords, i.e. the Philippine Technological Council (PTC) for engineering and the Philippine Information and Computing Accreditation Board (PICAB) for the computer sciences, both provisional members of the Washington and Seoul Accords, respectively.

While HEIs are not mandated to undergo accreditation by private accrediting bodies, CHED nevertheless supports such accreditation and encourages HEIs to undergo the process by utilizing the results of their accreditation in the grant of incentives to HEIs such as curricular and administrative deregulation. The level of accreditation status of an HEI, for instance, serves as a measure of programme or institutional excellence, which is among

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CHED's criteria for the grant of autonomous or deregulated status to private HEIs and SUCs, levelling status to public HEIs. It is also a criterion for the selection of Centres of Excellence and Centres of Development in various disciplines.

As a government institution, CHED's performance is subjected to quality standards. Each CHED office is required to submit annually an 'Office Performance Commitment Report' (OPCR). Office performance is evaluated according to the quality/effectiveness, efficiency, and timeliness in accomplishing its programme targets. These reports are consolidated into the Agency's annual accomplishment report and submitted to the Office of the President. OPCRs are not public documents.

Approval of programmes

Approval of programmes is listed as one of the functions of CHED in RA 7722, specifically stated in Sections 8(d) and 8(e) of the law. CHED is the only QA agency responsible for managing programme approval processes and monitoring compliance of the HEIs with the existing minimum standards. Based on the existing organizational structure of CHED, the Office of Programs and Standards Development (OPSD) and the CHED Regional Offices (CHEDROs) are in charge of the processing of programme approval. The OPSD is tasked to develop the policies, standards, and guidelines (PSGs) for various degree programmes that set the minimum quality standards or requirements pertaining to administration (deans/department heads), faculty qualifications, learning resources, facilities/laboratories, and curriculum for particular disciplines. The CHEDROs, on the other hand, implement the PSGs on the ground.

The process of programme approval is different for private and public HEIs. Private HEIs submit their application to offer an undergraduate degree programme to the CHEDRO for evaluation. If deemed complete, the CHEDRO will send a Regional Quality Assessment Team (RQAT), composed of duly designated programme experts in the region (who are not organic CHED staff) to conduct an on-site evaluation of the HEI. The RQAT determines the compliance of the HEI with the minimum requirements pertaining to the degree programme applied for. Their recommendation will be submitted to the CHEDRO which, in turn, issues the appropriate certificate of government authorization where the RQAT recommendation is favourable. The HEIs apply in three phases before the programmes applied for are fully approved. The first phase is the application for an initial permit to offer a particular degree programme for a first and second year of operation. This means that the HEI must comply with the minimum requirements pertaining to the first two years of a programme's operation. The second phase of application is for the renewal of the permit for a third year of operation. The third and final phase is the application for Government Recognition, requiring that the HEI has fully complied with the minimum requirements for 1st to 4th years.

For programmes in medicine, nursing, dentistry, maritime education, engineering, graduate education and programmes without PSGs, private HEIs apply at the CHEDRO, which endorses the application to the OPSD. It is the OPSD that processes the programme approval or authority for these particular programmes to operate with the assistance of the Technical Committees/Panels and recommends approval to the CHED Commission en banc.

For SUCs and LUCs, approval of their academic programmes is coursed through their governing boards following the Charters/Ordinance that created them. Prior to 2010, public HEIs subjected their new programmes to the CHED process of approval on a voluntary basis. However, since then, there has been a marked increase in applications of SUCs and LUCs for Certificates of Program Compliance. This came after CHED had

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explained to their respective governing boards that they would only recognize those existing public HEI programmes that have gone through the Commission's process of approving programs. For new programmes after 2010, the prior approval of the CHEDRO for undergraduate programmes of SUCs and OPSD for their graduate programmes have become a prerequisite for the SUC governing boards' approval of new programmes.

For authority to offer medicine, nursing, dentistry, maritime and engineering programmes, public HEIs go through the same CHED approval process as the private HEIs.

The CHED website maintains a listing of all approved programme offerings of each HEI.[31] The list includes graduate programmes and programme offerings of local universities and colleges (LUCs).

Approval of providers

CHED, specifically the CHEDROs, is the only body that approves the establishment of private HEIs. The key functions of CHED are found in Section 8 (d) and (e) of RA 7722.

Congress approves the establishment of SUCs. However, CHED provides its review and position on such establishment prior to their legislation. For LUCs, it is the local government units (LGUs) that approve the establishment of providers. According to RA 7160 or the Local Government Code of 1991 (Article 3, Section 447; Article 3, Section 458; Article 3, Section 468), municipalities, cities, and provinces through their respective local governing councils can establish schools that offers post-secondary programmes because these are the units that can address the particular needs of their immediate communities.

The horizontal classification of new private and public HEIs (university, professional institute and college) as well as their vertical classification as autonomous, deregulated for private HEIs or SUC Levels I to V on the basis of programme and institutional quality (per DBM CHED Joint Circular No. 1, series of 2016) is the responsibility of the Office of Institutional Quality Assurance and Governance (OIQAG).

Approval process

For private HEIs: The institution submits its application to the CHEDRO to be recognized as an HEI and simultaneously to offer/operate a degree programme. The CHEDRO conducts document analysis and site visit of the facilities. It then determines compliance with the set of criteria as per CMO No. 40, series 2008 (Manual of Regulations for Private Higher Education or MORPHE). To apply for vertical (autonomous or deregulated status) or horizontal (university, professional institution, college), the HEI submits the necessary documents to CHEDRO. The CHEDRO checks the completeness and validity of the data submitted. Afterwards, the CHEDRO endorses the case to OIQAG for evaluation. After evaluating the application, OIQAG presents its findings to the Technical Working Group on HEI Classification. The Technical Working Group deliberates on the findings then makes a recommendation on the classification of the HEI to the Commission en banc for approval. The Commission en banc makes the final decision on the classification of the HEI. It should be noted that horizontal and vertical classification of private HEIs is currently on an application basis and thus is voluntary in nature. However, horizontal classification is a pre-requisite to vertical classification.

For SUCs: A House Bill is filed at the Lower House of Congress (House of Representatives) for establishing a SUC or converting a state college into a state university. CHED determines compliance of the institution and submits compliance reports and its position on the eligibility of the HEI to the Committee on Higher and Technical Education of the

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[31] http://www.ched.gov.ph/central/page/ched-program-list

Lower House, which subsequently makes the decision to proceed with the process of passing the Bill in the Lower House and file the Bill if passed to the Upper House of Congress (Senate). Once passed, the bill is transformed into law, which is referred to as Republic Act, for signature of the President of the Philippines.

For LUCs: Local Government Units (LGU) that will establish a local college or an existing community college or university which aims to be recognized as a higher education institution must work closely with their respective CHED Regional Office on the set policies, standards and guidelines on the establishment and operation of LUCs by the Commission. The institution to be established should start as a local college and not as a university. The LGU will be given the Certificate of Authority to establish and operate a higher education institution (or Certificate of Recognition for existing LUCs), upon full compliance with CHED requirements. This is issued after the Commission en Banc approves the application of the LGU on the bases of the evaluation of CHEDRO and Verification Visit conducted by the Office Institutional Quality Assurance and Governance. The Certificate of Authority granted for the Establishment and Operation of a local college or approval for university status is not equivalent to authority to operate a degree program.

The requirements to establish a private HEI are listed in Section 21 of CHED Memorandum Order No. 40, s. 2008, http://www.ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/CMO-No.40-s2008.pdf. It includes criteria related to financial commitment, facilities and equipment, teaching staff and assistants, and curriculum.

CHED Memorandum Order No. 46, series of 2012, http://www.ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/CMO-No.46-s2012.pdf, lists the requirements for horizontal classification. These criteria are also followed in the establishment of SUCs. The criteria for professional institutions, colleges and universities vary slightly but include: qualifications of faculty staff, degree programmes, learning/resources/support structures.

CHED Memorandum Order No. 46, series of 2012, http://www.ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/CMO-No.46-s2012.pdf, also lists down the requirements for vertical classification, which includes programme excellence and institutional quality. In addition to these two criteria, HEIs must also comply with requirements pertaining to their horizontal type. For instance, 'research and publications for universities; creative work and relevant extension programmes for colleges; and employability or linkages for professional institutions'.

In establishing or recognizing LUCs, OIQAG is guided by CHED Memorandum Order No. 32, series 2006, http://www.ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/CMO-No.32-s2006.pdf. LUCs must submit the evidence of: a feasibility study, sufficient funds, project development plan, and a five year institutional plan.

Each set of criteria is supported by a CHED Memorandum Order. OIQAG has also released an e-publication of Handbook on Typology, OBE, and ISA. HEIs are also provided with self-evaluation instruments.

The CHED website lists the HEIs with recognized programme offerings. A list of autonomous and deregulated HEIs is issued as a CHED Memorandum Order and in this case it is CHED Memorandum Order No. 58, series 2017 for the latest list

URL: http://www.ched.gov.ph/central/page/ched-program-list

Monitoring of providers and programmes

It is the function of CHEDROs to monitor the quality and currency of programmes. There are instances that the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) with CHED conduct monitoring of programmes that have licensure examinations. This monitoring is only conducted when the need arises.

In relation to monitoring of providers, all public and private HEIs are required to submit statistical data to CHED. CHEDROs are expected to monitor the HEIs under their jurisdiction and take follow up actions. Monitoring of HEIs is usually programme-based and done yearly. The monitoring reports are not made public. The CHEDROs can strategize on how they can do the monitoring depending on their context or situation. There is no uniform risk-based approached.

In addition to CHEDRO monitoring, the budget allocation of SUCs as well as the bonuses of their personnel are subject to some performance and quality-based criteria.

Internal quality assurance

The Office of Institutional Quality Assurance and Governance (OIQAG) is currently advocating the Institutional Sustainability Assessment (ISA) of HEIs. The ISA Framework aims to enhance or develop the IQA of HEIs. HEIs are evaluated in five key results areas: governance and management, quality of teaching and learning, quality of professional exposure, research, and creative work, support for students, and relations with the community.

As of the moment, IQA is not legislated, but undergoing the ISA process is considered in the evaluation of private HEIs applying for autonomous or deregulated status and of SUCs in determining their SUC Levels. OIQAG encourages HEIs to have a dedicated quality assurance unit or office, but it is not yet a requirement. Based on a survey in recent years, OIQAG found that in many HEIs, QA concerns are handled by the Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. Some mature institutions have a dedicated unit, however.

CHED recognizes the role of ISO audits in helping HEIs put their Quality Management Systems in place, but urges ISO providers to adapt their audits to the nuances of higher education systems so as to have greater impact on the quality of educational institutions. It has also encouraged the accreditation bodies to undertake institutional accreditation of HEIs to help improve their internal QA systems.

Singapore

Overview of NQF

The Singapore Ministry of Education (MOE) oversees pre-school, primary, secondary, and post-secondary education in Singapore. At the post-secondary level, publicly funded higher education institutions such as the autonomous universities, polytechnics and the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) are under the direct oversight of MOE. On the other hand, private training providers, including those that fall under the scope of the Private Education Act, come under the regulatory purview of the SkillsFuture Singapore Agency (SSG), a statutory board of MOE.[32]

Singapore does not have a national qualifications framework. However, Singapore has developed the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) system. It is a national credential system administered by SSG. It is used to train, develop, assess and certify skills and competencies for the workforce. The key features of the WSQ are:

- **Relevant:** A competency-based system, designed to develop job role-specific skills and competencies, as well as generic skills and competencies that are required across job roles.
- **Accessible:** Academic pre-requisites are generally not required for entry, with some recognition accorded for prior learning, such as work experience and credentials.
- **Progression:** Makes available skills and qualification pathways which are aligned to the Skills Framework[33] for the respective sectors.
- **Authority:** Statements of Attainment and qualifications are awarded by SSG and/or in partnership with established awarding bodies.

The WSQ offers bite-size training modules to enable learning at each individual's own pace. Upon completion of each module, a Statement of Attainment (SOA) is awarded. Relevant SOAs can be accumulated towards a full WSQ Qualification. There are six levels of WSQ Qualifications and more than 30 WSQ frameworks, covering technical and generic skills/competencies. Training programmes developed and accredited under the WSQ system are based on skills and competencies validated by employers, unions and professional bodies.

Table 1: Summary of the WSQ

Item	WSQ Only - implementation
Levels	6
Level descriptors	Yes
Qualification types titles specified	Yes
Qualification types descriptors	Yes
Control of qualification titles and types	Yes (providers intending to offer WSQ courses must meet the accreditation criteria established by SSG)
Volume of learning or credit	Yes

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[32] SSG drives and coordinates the implementation of the national SkillsFuture movement. It also regulates private education institutions (PEIs) i.e. private providers that fall under the scope of the Private Education Act, through the Committee for Private Education. SSG's objectives are to build an integrated, high-quality and responsive education and training system, foster employer recognition and co-ownership of skills, and create a strong culture of lifelong learning supporting the pursuit of skills mastery.

[33] Skills Frameworks provide information on industry, career pathways, existing and emerging skills required for various job roles and training programmes for skills upgrading and mastery. With the roll out of the Skills Frameworks in 2016, the WSQ adopts the skills and competencies covered in the Skills Frameworks.

Item	WSQ Only - implementation
value	
Qualification pathways	Specified
Credit transfer system	Not found on website
Documentation of NQF	Not found on website
Website	http://www.ssg.gov.sg/wsq.html

Overview of Quality Assurance

Summary of Quality Assurance

MOE-funded HEIs come under the direct purview of MOE, which has in place quality assurance frameworks for each segment. The objectives of these frameworks are to enhance the overall quality of the institutions and reinforce institutional best practices. It ensures that the institutions' systems and structures are properly aligned to achieve their mission and that HEIs provide quality education through the use of public funds provided by MOE. It also encourages continuous improvement within the HEI and across the sector, by complementing the institution's existing internal quality assurance systems and processes.

Private training providers that are regulated under the Private Education Act, i.e. private education institutions (PEIs), must be registered with the Committee for Private Education (CPE), whose Enhanced Registration Framework (ERF) sets out minimum standards for registration. In addition to the ERF, CPE also administers a quality assurance scheme – the EduTrust Certification Scheme – which allows PEIs that are able to consistently maintain high standards of quality in their management practices and provision of education services to be distinguished from other providers. Similarly, any training provider that wishes to offer WSQ courses must meet the accreditation criteria established by SSG. The WSQ system is underpinned by a strong quality assurance framework to ensure that the development and delivery of WSQ courses and assessment of trainees meet the necessary standards.

A summary of the quality assurance frameworks is provided in Tables 2.

Table 2: Quality Assurance Frameworks

Category		Agency	Legislation/ Regulation	Quality Assurance Framework
Publicly funded HEIs	• Universities • Polytechnics • Institute of Technical Education • Arts Institutions	MOE	The universities, polytechnics and ITE are governed by their own Acts of Parliament	• Quality Assurance Framework for Universities (QAFU) • Polytechnic Quality Assurance Framework (PQAF) • Institute of Technical Education Quality Assurance Framework (IQAF) • Arts Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF)
Private training providers	Private Education Institutions (PEIs)	CPE (under SSG)	Private Education Act	• EduTrust Certification Scheme • Enhanced Registration Framework (ERF)
	WSQ Training Providers Note: Some publicly funded HEIs also deliver WSQ training and are	SSG	N.A.	• WSQ System

Category		Agency	Legislation/ Regulation	Quality Assurance Framework
	subject to the WSQ quality assurance framework			

A summary of the quality assurance arrangements is included in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of Quality Assurance

Responsible for…	Approval (initial) of HEIs to operate	Monitoring of HEIs	Approval of programmes of study	Approval to delivery programmes of study	Monitoring programmes of study
Public HEIs	MOE	MOE	MOE	Self-approval	Self-approval HEIs can also opt to appoint an accreditation agency to accredit their programmes i.e. ABET. Accreditation is voluntary) Internal Self-accrediting
Private Education Institutions	CPE (under SSG)	CPE (under SSG)	CPE (under SSG)	CPE (under SSG)	CPE (under SSG)
WSQ Training Providers	SSG	SSG	SSG	SSG	SSG

Approval of providers and programmes

Private Education Institutions (PEIs)

PEIs (i.e. private providers that offer or provide private education as defined in the Private Education Act) are required to register with CPE under the ERF. The ERF sets the minimum standards, that all PEIs must meet to be registered, and covering the following areas – corporate governance, quality of provision, and information transparency.

CPE's EduTrust Certification Scheme seeks to distinguish PEIs that are able to consistently maintain high standards in their management practices and provision of education services. The scheme assesses PEIs against seven criteria which cover:

- Management commitment and responsibilities
- Corporate governance and administration
- External recruitment agents
- Student protection and support services
- Academic processes and student assessment
- Achievement of student and graduate outcomes
- Quality assurance, monitoring and results

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PEIs that fulfil the criteria for EduTrust certification are allowed to display the EduTrust certification mark in their publicity materials.

PEIs are required to seek CPE's approval for any course that they wish to offer or provide. From 2017, all PEIs that offer degree programmes from overseas universities will also need to fulfil EduTrust certification in order to continue offering such programmes.

For more details, refer to CPE's website:

https://www.cpe.gov.sg/for-peis/enhanced-registration-framework-erf/registration-requirements   https://www.cpe.gov.sg/for-peis/edutrust-certification-scheme

<u>WSQ Training Providers</u>

The WSQ is underpinned by a strong quality assurance framework to ensure that the development and delivery of WSQ courses and assessment of trainees meet the necessary standards. Any training provider that wishes to offer WSQ courses must meet the accreditation criteria established by SSG.

Accreditation System for WSQ ATOs and Courses

There are two accreditation processes for training providers that wish to offer WSQ courses. First, under the Organisation Accreditation process, SSG evaluates training providers' ability to design and develop a curriculum, their training delivery, financial management practices, and whether they have qualified adult educators to design and conduct the training and assessment. Next, under the Course Accreditation process, SSG evaluates the training providers' courseware design and development, and assessment design. A training provider that is accredited by SSG to provide WSQ training and assessments will be appointed as an Approved Training Organisation (ATO).

Post-Accreditation Audits

Every ATO is expected to maintain and upkeep the standard of delivery in training and assessment. SSG will periodically validate the WSQ internal quality assurance system and capability of the ATO under the Continuous Improvement Review (CIR) audits. The results of the CIR will determine the renewal of the ATOs.

Monitoring of providers and programmes

The monitoring arrangements of providers and programmes are summarised in the following table.

Table 4: Monitoring Arrangements

Category	Agency	Monitoring
Publicly funded HEIs	MOE	The QAF cycle takes place every five years and involves an institutional self-assessment, an external validation by an external review panel appointed by MOE, and follow-up initiatives by the institutions. Follow-up actions are tracked by MOE on an annual basis.
Private Education Institutions (PEIs)	CPE (under SSG)	Under the mandatory Enhanced Registration Framework (ERF), CPE conducts inspections as part of the process for registration or renewal of registration, to check if PEIs meet the minimum standards. The renewal of registration will ensure that PEIs continue to comply with ERF requirements if they remain in the sector. Based on overall assessment of PEIs, registration periods of 1-year, 4-year or 6-year will be granted. PEIs are also required to submit an annual returns report to CPE.
WSQ Training Providers	SSG	Every ATO is expected to maintain and upkeep the standard of delivery in training and assessment. SSG will periodically validate the WSQ internal quality assurance system and capability of ATO under the Continuous Improvement Review (CIR) audits. The results of the CIR will determine the renewal of the ATOs.

Internal quality assurance

The expectations in relation to internal quality assurance are outlined below.

Table 5: Internal quality assurance requirements

Category	Agency	IQA Requirements
Publicly funded HEIs	MOE	Publicly funded HEIs are responsible for their own internal quality assurance. The QAF is meant to complement the HEI's existing QA systems and processes and not replace or override them.
Private Education Institutions (PEIs)	CPE (under SSG)	CPE's EduTrust Certification Scheme includes a criterion to examine the effectiveness of the systems and processes a PEI has in place to meet the quality assurance requirements for continual improvement.
WSQ Training Providers	SSG	SSG periodically validates the WSQ internal quality assurance system and capability of ATO under the CIR audits.

References

Committee for Private Education (CPE), accessed 24/07/2017, https://www.cpe.gov.sg/

SkillsFuture Singapore Agency (SSG), accessed 24/07/2017, http://www.ssg.gov.sg/wsq.html

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Thailand

Overview of NQF

Although the Cabinet of Thailand approved the National Qualifications Framework in January 2013 and its implementation in November 2014, the NQF has undergone further changes. A revised framework has been approved by Cabinet in April 2017 (National Qualifications Framework). The framework now includes eight levels (rather than nine) due to the perception that it will be easier for Thailand to reference to the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) in the future.

The Office of the Education Council is responsible for providing national information, coordinating, managing and monitoring the NQF. The framework is under the remit of a National Qualifications Framework Committee, which is supported by a secretariat. The members of the National Qualifications Framework Committee come from numerous agencies relevant to qualifications.[34]

The NQF covers all education sectors: secondary education, TVET, higher education, skills standards qualifications, and professional qualifications (Thailand Professional Qualification Institute [TPQI] qualifications), and non-formal learning. It includes not just qualification titles and levelling of the sub-frameworks but also mechanisms to link work experience and recognition of prior learning, credit accumulation and a focus on learning outcomes.

Table 1: **Revised NQF**

Educational Qualifications			NQF Levels	Occupational Standards	
Basic Education	Vocational Education	Higher Education		Professional Qualification Level	National Skill Standards/Occupational Standards
		Doctoral Degree	Level 8	PQ 8	NSS 6
		Master Degree	Level 7	PQ 7	NSS 5
	Bachelor Degree (B. Tech.)	Bachelor Degree	Level 6	PQ 6	NSS 4
	Diploma in Vocational/	Diploma	Level 5	PQ 5	NSS 3
			Level 4	PQ 4	NSS 2

[34] The National Committee on NQF is made up of the Minister of Education, the Permanent Secretaries of several resorts (Labour; Education; Commerce; Industry; Tourism and Sports; Finance; Agriculture and Cooperatives; Transport; Natural Resources and Environment; Digital Economy and Society; Public Health), the Chairmen of the Federation of Thai Industries and the Thai Chamber of Commerce, the President of the Tourism Council of Thailand, the Secretary-Generals of numerous bodies (National Economic and Social Development Board; Civil Service Commission; Higher Education Commission; Education Commission; Basic Education Commission), the Director-General of the Development of Skill Development, the Directors of the Thailand Professional Qualification Institute and the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (both Public Organizations), and further experts.

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	Technical Education				
Upper Secondary + Occupational	Vocational Education Certificate		Level 3	PQ 3	NSS 1
Upper secondary			Level 2	PQ 2	OS 2
Lower secondary			Level 1	PQ 1	OS 1

Source: Office of the Education Council 2017

A summary of Thailand's National Qualifications Framework is noted below.

Table 2: Summary of the NQF

Item	Level of implementation
Levels	8
Level descriptors	Yes
Qualification types titles specified	Yes
Qualification types descriptors	No
Control of qualification titles and types	No
Volume of learning or credit value	No
Qualification pathways	Comments are included in the NQF document
Credit transfer system	No
Documentation of NQF	No
Website	No

In addition, the Thai Qualification Framework for Higher Education was established in 2009. This framework is a six-level framework, with the following domains: ethics and morals, knowledge, cognitive skills, interpersonal skills and responsibility, and, numerical analysis, communication and information technology skills. The framework is supported by guidelines (2009) to ensure that the institutions comply with the Higher Education Standards.

The Thai Professional Qualifications Institute has developed a qualifications framework that also has eight levels. Although not part of the traditional higher education sector, the qualifications in this sector are within the higher levels of the NQF.

Overview of the qualifications system

Thai higher education institutions include 80 public HEIs, of which 19 are autonomous universities, 14 are traditional universities, 9 Rajabhat universities[35] and 38 Rajamangala Universities of Technology.[36] [37] In the private sector, there are 75 HEIs, with 43

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[35] Formerly teachers colleges

[36] A system of universities providing undergraduate and graduate level of education

[37] Office of Higher Education Commission, 201?a

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universities, 12 institutions, and 20 colleges. There is also one community college made up of 20 campuses.

Public universities have their own Act empowering the University Council to act as a governing body. Autonomous universities have their 'own administrative structure and budgeting system for self-governance and full autonomy, allowing decision making on administrative management matters'.[38]

Overview of Quality Assurance

Summary of Quality Assurance

The role of quality assurance of HEIs is a shared responsibility. A summary of the quality assurance mechanisms is noted below.

Table 3: Summary of Quality Assurance

Responsible for…	Responsibility for approval (initial) of HEIs to operate	Responsibility for monitoring of HEIs	Responsibility for approval of programmes of study	Responsibility for approval to delivery programmes of study	Responsibility for monitoring programmes of study
Legislation/ regulation etc	Each public university is governed by its own Act of Parliament National Education Act 1999 (2nd amendment 2002) Private University Act 2003 Royal decree establishing the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public organization) 2000 The Ministry of Education Proclamation on regulation regarding the standards criteria on curriculum, degree nomenclature, credit transfer, cooperation with foreign university, Thai Qualifications Framework on Higher Education, discipline standards etc Ministerial Regulation regarding Systems, Regulations and Methods for internal Quality Assurance among Higher Education Institutions (2003, amended and updated 2010)				
Autonomous Public HEIs	External Minister of Education	External ONESQA	Internal	Internal	External ONESQA
Other HEIs / Private Education Institutions (PEIs)	External Minister of Education	External ONESQA	Internal	Internal	External ONESQA

Role of Office of Higher Education Commission

Approval of programmes and providers

The Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC) Policy and Planning Bureau under the National Education Act has responsibility for establishing HEIs. An organisation wishing to establish a university must own land in Thailand and must submit a feasibility study report to the OHEC Bureau of Policy and Planning, detailing aspects such as market needs; target groups; plans for academic operations; staffing; financials and an overview of proposed curricula.

The Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (TQF) provides universities with a framework for quality as well as programme standards. Under the National Education Act 1999, all HEIs must adhere to criteria for curricula. Based on the TQF, the Outcome-Based Education approach is incorporated in a learning and teaching process in order to achieve the expected learning outcomes. The more recently developed NQF was designed in

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[38] Office of Higher Education Commission, 201?b

response to the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF). In the future, the TQF will be reviewed to ensure its relevancy to Thailand's NQF and the AQRF.

Under the TQF, the quality cycle (plan, do, check, act) is introduced as the implementation mechanism. Stakeholder cooperation in various fields of study is promoted. It is as a bottom-up approach to set up discipline standards of each field or broad field. At present, there are 17 standards, for example Engineering, Education, and Nursing. They serve as the reference point for curriculum design in the related fields. Where these discipline standards exist, they must be adhered to. The internal course approval process must follow the Ministry of Education's standard criteria for undergraduate and graduate degrees. In case there is a relevant professional standard, the programme must adhere both to the ministry's and the professional standards.

Once curricula are approved by University Councils, the programme delivery can begin. In the meantime, the curricula have to be presented to OHEC for recognition. Course outlines, learning outcomes, an overview of faculty qualifications, programme philosophy, curriculum structure and resources are cross-checked against OHEC standards. Apart from OHEC recognition, the university must submit the curricula to a professional agency as required by the agency. Then, OHEC will send the list and detail of the recognized curriculum to the Office of Civil Service Commission. It is used as a guideline for compensation calculation for graduates who seek employments in the government sector. OHEC also disseminates the list of curricula through the Thai Qualifications Register. The curriculum shown in the Thai Qualifications Register must meet the requirements of IQA and TQF.

According to MOE announcements and regulations, universities must review the curricula every five years. If substantial revisions to curricula are made, such revisions are to be approved and recognized by the University Councils and OHEC, respectively.

OHEC can recommend provisional approval for private universities, which is not a guarantee of registration. At this stage, the provisionally approved university begins to develop. The organisation is required to submit progress reports every three months until completion. If the proposal is approved, OHEC submits a recommendation to the Minister that the institution be granted a license. Classes must commence within six months of approval. The amount of land and the quality of the organisation's facilities determine whether the HEI will be classified as an institution, college or university.

Approval of private HEIs is bound by the Private University Act (2003), a by-law identifying the criteria, method and condition in acquiring licences for establishing of Private Education (2006), a by-law identifying the proper amount of land ownership (2006) and a by-law identifying the type of private higher education institutions (2006). For private HEIs, approval after licensing is ongoing. The HEIs are required to submit an annual report to OHEC, disclosing their financial status and governance arrangements, including council membership and detailing the number of students and lecturers. Any changes to Council membership are reported to OHEC. If the annual report raises questions about the operations of the HEI a site visit can occur.

Although there is an internal database of HEIs and the programmes they conduct there is no public register.

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Monitoring of providers and programmes

OHEC has a role in monitoring quality at programme, faculty/school, and institutional levels by setting up criteria and guidelines for IQA. If an HEI conducts a programme outside the main campus, OHEC has the authority to monitor the programme. OHEC does not have the power to apply sanctions to HEIs but can provide recommendations to 1) improve the programme quality or 2) cancel the programme. In addition, the Private University Act 2003 grants the authority to the Minister of Education to revoke a HEI's license.

Internal quality assurance

The requirement to implement an internal quality assurance system for all HEIs is based on the Ministerial regulation on the Systems, Regulations and Methods for Internal Quality Assurance among Higher Education Institutions (2003, amended and updated 2010).

Under this regulation, HEIs are responsible for implementing an internal quality assurance system. According to the OHEC's Manual for the Internal Quality Assurance (2014), IQA covers programme, faculty/school and institutional quality. At the programme level, it addresses 1) regulatory standards, 2) graduates, 3) students, 4) instructors, 5) curriculum, learning and teaching, learner assessment and 6) learning resources. At the faculty/school and institutional levels, the IQA addresses 1) graduate production, 2) research, 3) academic service, 4) preservation of arts and culture and 5) administration and management. HEIs are required to complete and submit an annual self-assessment report to OHEC through the QA Online System.

Role of ONESQA

ONESQA was established by Royal Decree in 2000. Under the National Education Act 1999, ONESQA is a government-subsidised public organization that reports to the Office of the Prime Minister. ONESQA has no regulatory power over the organisations that it assesses but provides feedback on the quality of institutions to the government, the public and the institutions themselves. Institution assessment reports are published on the ONESQA website.

ONESQA's role is to develop the system, including criteria and methods of external assessment of educational outcomes, across all educational sectors (approximately 60,000 institutions in all), except for training colleges or those that fall under the Thailand Professional Qualification Institute (TPQI).

ONESQA certifies and develops external quality assessors and manages the assessment process and its quality. ONESQA confers educational institutions with certificates, credentials and testimonials for their activities.

ONESQA operates on a five-year cycle, where it assesses 12,000 institutions a year. Two hundred and sixty HEIs are assessed by ONESQA. After each cycle, assessment reports are synthesised with a view to determining whether education institutions are meeting the requirements of the government and educational policy. Reports are provided to the Ministry of Education, which uses these results to formulate policy on quality assurance in education.

Every five-year cycle, ONESQA changes the key performance indicators against which it assesses institutions, with the goal of gradually raising the level of quality of basic education, vocational and technical education institutions and higher education. By setting additional quality key performance indicators, HEIs are obligated to develop systems to

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meet these requirements. Boards drawn from each of these sectors assist in developing the key performance indicators.

Assessment is done at faculty level and at organisation level, and assessors spend three days on site. The institution's self-assessments are reviewed by the assessment team and considered as an input to the process – the quality of the self-assessment is not considered in the assessment process. The assessment team includes external subject specialists and ONESQA regular assessors. ONESQA officers are not permitted to join an assessment team, to ensure independence and credibility, although they can accompany a team for research purposes.

OHEC's requirements relating to teaching, learning and research are integrated in to the assessment, where relevant, for each cycle. ONESQA is committed to moving towards the assessment of outcomes rather than inputs, which they see as the purview of the HEIs themselves.

When the assessment reports are submitted, meta-assessors review the report and field notes. A decision is made by the Higher Education Assessment Board and finally by the Executive Committee of ONESQA, which has external representation, as detailed in the legislation. All institutions are scored and rated and are provided with a certificate reporting the rating. Ratings are reported to OHEC, who then assist the HEI in managing shortfalls.

Role of the TPQI

The Thailand Professional Qualification Institute (Public Organization) was established through Royal Decree in 2011, and is under the supervision of the Prime Minister. Although not considered part of the higher education sector, its qualifications range up to level 8 on the NQF. TPQI is responsible for developing the national professional qualifications system including the professional qualifications framework, supporting the industry in developing occupational standards, registering and monitoring organisations responsible for assessing competencies of individuals in accordance with the developed occupational standards.

Approval and monitoring of programmes and providers

Accreditation processes are legislated through the role of the TPQI rather than specific legislation related to accreditation. TPQI through the Royal Decree can prescribe guidelines, aims and policies on administering the affairs of the Institute. Requirements of the TPQI are spelt out in the Royal Decree.

Through the support of TPQI, occupational standards and qualifications are developed by the industrial and business sectors, agreed and signed off by senior representatives of the industry and business sectors and responsible government agencies, tabled at the TPQI's Board of management meetings and announced in the Royal Gazettes by the Institute.

The qualifications are designed at a national level to meet the requirements of the Thailand Professional Qualifications Framework. Qualifications (and units of competency) accredited are listed in Royal Gazettes and on the TPQI website.

TPQI issues the qualifications if candidates have acquired enough competencies according to different occupational standards. Assessment centres undertake assessments of competence on TPQI's behalf.

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TPQI accredits assessment centres for the assessment of competencies and issuance of qualifications under its remit. Centres must meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 17024:2012 related to Personnel Certification Bodies/Certification Bodies for Persons. This standard contains principles and requirements for a body certifying persons against specific requirements, and includes the development and maintenance of a certification scheme for persons.

TPQI intends to audit and quality assure these assessment centres to meet certain standards. TPQI has determined that formal auditing will occur with assessment centres once a year. The result of the audit is reported to the TPQI Governing Board and then to the assessment centres and the outcomes of monitoring are listed on TPQI's website (but not the whole report as there is confidential information).

Internal quality assurance
TPQI is certified by ISO 9001:2015 related to Quality Management System which specifies requirements for a quality management system for Thailand Professional Qualification System. TPQI needs to demonstrate its ability to consistently provide products and services that meet stakeholders and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, and aims to enhance stakeholder satisfaction through the effective application of the system, including processes for improvement of the system and the assurance of conformity to stakeholders and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements (covering the TPQF, occupational standards setting, process of assessment centres accrediting and monitoring, certification issuance and stakeholder satisfaction).

External quality assurance
ISO/IEC 17024:2012 related to Personnel Certification Bodies/Certification Bodies for Persons includes the requirement for the certification body to develop procedures to review its management system at planned intervals to ensure that it meets the standard. The reviews must be conducted at least annually.

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Viet Nam

Overview of NQF

Viet Nam has through the *Decision on Approval for Vietnamese Qualifications Framework October 2016* endorsed the Vietnamese Qualifications Framework (VQF). The scope of the framework applies 'to education levels specified in the Law on Vocational Education and the Law on Higher Education' (Socialist Republic of Viet Nam 2016). It aims to:

- Classify and standardise qualifications
- Provide an effective mechanism for quality assessment and evaluation
- To inform the implementation of learning outcomes in programmes
- To inform the relationship of national qualifications framework of other countries via regional or international reference frameworks as the basis for mutual recognition
- To formulate transition mechanisms between educational levels and with lifelong learning.[39]

Table 1: Summary of the NQF

Item	Vietnam – implementation
Levels	8
Level descriptors	Yes
Qualification types titles specified	Yes
Qualification types descriptors	No
Control of qualification titles and types	No
Volume of learning or credit value	Yes
Qualification pathways	Noted in level descriptors
Credit transfer system	No
Documentation of NQF	One document
Website	No

The level descriptors are based on the following domains:

- Factual and theoretical knowledge
- Awareness, professional practice skills and communication skills
- Personal autonomy and responsibility in the application of knowledge and skills in the conduct of professional tasks.[40]

Both the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and the Ministry of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) are responsible for the management and implementation of the NQF in their sector. They are to cooperate with each other and relevant Ministries and regulatory bodies in establishing the relation between the sectors. In addition, they are to preside over and cooperate with relevant Ministries, regulatory bodies and professional associations, educational institutions and relevant research institutes in establishing and approving outcome standards and proofs of each levels, sectors and disciplines.[41]

As of June 2017, the MOET has not developed a plan for implementing the VQF in higher education.

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[39]Adapted from Socialist Republic of Viet Nam 2016
[40]Socialist Republic of Viet Nam 2016
[41]Socialist Republic of Viet Nam 2016

Overview of the qualifications system

In 2016, the higher education system included 219 colleges (189 public and 30 private) and 223 universities (163 public, 60 private). There were 303 TVET providers (175 public, 128 private). All TVET providers operate under the remit of the Ministry of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), and all higher education institutions are under the quality assurance remit of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET).[42]

There are three types of universities:

1. Specialized universities: related economics, engineering, agriculture, education, arts, or law
2. Multi-disciplinary universities (such as Vietnam National University in Hanoi; Vietnam National University in Ho Chi Minh City; Da Nang University; Hue University; Thai Nguyen University)
3. Distance/Open (i.e. Hanoi Open University; Ho Chi Minh City Open University).

As of July 2017, there were stated to be 235 universities, of which 19 have been granted autonomous status. Across the categories of universities, the same external quality assurance processes apply.

Degree (and higher) programmes fall under the remit of universities, and therefore legislated through the Law on Higher Education (2012). Colleges and upper secondary schools fall under the remit of MOLISA.

Overview of Quality Assurance

Summary of Quality Assurance

The Law on Higher Education 08/2012 took effect in January 2013 and aimed to reform and regulate the higher education sector. The law refers to institutional autonomy, quality assurance, university classification and ranking. National and regional universities, and private universities are now covered under this legislation. In relation to autonomy, universities are now able to manage staff, finances and property, to issue degrees, to manage their academic affairs (within the curriculum boundaries set by MOET, specifically the development, appraisal and introduction of the training programmes) and to choose the education accreditation agency approved by MOET. The law also regulates the responsibilities of partners in twinning programmes.[43] [44]

The Law on Higher Education 08/2012 requires internal and external accreditation of HEIs, and the results of quality accreditation must be publicly reported. It also requires education quality accreditation agencies to have legal status and to be accountable for their accreditation activities. MOET is responsible for providing the legal status for these accreditation agencies.[45]

A summary of the quality assurance arrangements is included below.

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[42]Ministry of Education and Training 2017
[43]Australian Education International 2013
[44]Law on Higher Education 08/2012
[45]Australian Education International 2013

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Table 2: Summary of Quality Assurance

Responsible for…	Approval (initial) of HEIs to operate	Monitoring of HEIs	Approval of programmes of study	Approval to deliver programmes of study	Monitoring programmes of study
Legislation/ regulation etc	Law on Higher Education 08/2012/QH13 Regulation 04/2016/TT-BGDĐT on the evaluation standard of quality of programs and institutions General guideline 1074/KTKDCLGD-KDDH (2016) on the use of quality assessment standards of education programs General guideline 1075/KTKDCLGD-KDDH (2016) on self-assessment of training programs General guideline 1076/KTKDCLGD-KDDH (2016) on external evaluation of training programs General guidelines 1237/KTKDCLGD-KDDH (2016) on quality assessment at institutional level Announcement 702/TB-BGDDT (2016) on implementing quality control of higher education Circular12/2017/TT-BGDĐT Regulation on Accreditation at institutional level				
Universities - autonomous	External MOET	External MOET	Internal	Internal	External MOET Accrediting Agencies
Universities - non-autonomous	External MOET	External MOET Accrediting Agencies	External MOET	External MOET	Internal External MOET (Higher Education Department) Accrediting Agencies

There are four recognised centres for education accreditation:

1. VNU Center for Education Accreditation
2. VNU Ho Chi Minh City Center for Education Accreditation
3. Center for Education Accreditation of Association of Vietnam Universities and Colleges
4. Centre for Education Accreditation of Da Nang University.

Legislation (Law on Higher Education 08/2012) establishes these centres for education accreditation (CA),[46] and it is yet to be determined how the agencies will apply the VQF. Accrediting agency roles and functions includes the assessment and recognition of qualifications and programmes of higher education institutions. These assessments will impact on institutions including the entitlement of autonomy and independent responsibilities, as well as investment support and duty allocations; however, there is no regulation as to how this will be undertaken.

Law on Higher Education 08/2012 indicates that the Ministry is responsible for standard setting (of institutions, quality assessment, programmes), process and period of quality assessments, granting education quality assessment, staffing and standards for quality assessment. Specific criteria or standards for these accreditation centres and how they will be monitored is not made clear. There is no register of accrediting agencies.

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[46]Referred to as education quality assessment organisations in the Law on Higher Education 08/2012

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Approval of programmes

The Department of Higher Education is responsible for managing and monitoring programme and qualification in higher education institutions.

The process for programme approval varies depending on the autonomy of the university. For autonomous universities they approve and accredit their own programmes and notify MOET. For non-autonomous HEIs, the universities submit their application for programme accreditation to MOET (DHEd). Accreditation processes are based on the AUN-QA criteria. Both autonomous universities and non-autonomous universities are required to follow the regulations issued by the MOET. Most HEIs accredit their institutions under MOET criteria taken by the four accreditation centres or HEIs can register the accreditation under international standards.

At this stage, it is too early for the VQF to be applied in approval processes. Currently the approval guidelines developed by MOET do not include how to apply the VQF to approval processes.

There is no public register of approved qualifications.

Approval of providers

The Education Testing and Accreditation Department at MOET is responsible for undertaking two government management functions and services: testing and accreditation.

The approval if institutions is based on registration standards to be recognised as a higher education provider (no. 07/2015/TT-BGDĐT, no 43/04/2006/TT- BGDĐT, no. 24/2015/TT-BGDĐT, no 01/2017/QĐ-TTg, no.979/2015/BGDĐT-KTKĐCLGD, no 118/2017/KH-BGDĐT and no.09/2017/TT-BGDĐT). In addition, quality criteria specified in Regulation 04/2016/TT-BGDĐT also apply in regard to the performance of institutions (refer below). There is no public register of accredited institutions.

Monitoring of providers and programmes

The Regulation 04/2016/TT-BGDĐT on the evaluation standard of quality of programmes and institutions outline eleven programme standards and four system standards including:
1. Objective and output of the programme
2. Description of the programme
3. Structure and content of the programme
4. Teaching and learning approach
5. Assessment of learning outcomes
6. Teaching and research staff
7. Support staff
8. Student support, selection and monitoring of progress
9. Facilities and equipment
10. Quality improvement processes
11. Outputs, such as ratio graduate, employment of graduates
12. Quality control and testing unit
13. Management of the institution
14. Establishment of the institution
15. Focus on quality education.[47]

This regulation is supported by *General Guideline 1074/KTKDCLGD-KDDH on the use of quality assessment standards of education programs.*

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[47]Adapted from Regulation 04/2016

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Announcement 702/TB-BGDDT (2016) on the quality control of higher education indicates that the assessment of quality of higher education will be based on the AUN-QA criteria. It is noted that AUN-QA criteria have been considered and referred to when HEIs accredit the educational quality at programme and institutional level. How this relates to other determinations is not made clear.

The monitoring arrangements of providers and programmes is a shared responsibility of the Higher Education Department and the Inspectorate (MOET). HEIs monitored thought annual report, self-assessment report, and data reporting. MOET provides the policy framework which providers can implement and manage their own ongoing self-assessment and monitor compliance to nationally agreed quality assurance principles and processes, with external registration, assessment and validation.

The Inspectorate has an annual plan to review universities, it is anticipated that they can visit as a result of information, but it is estimated that they visit universities possibly once every 5 years. Internal self-assessments and any reports emanating from the Inspectorate are not made public.

With centres of education accreditation, institutions are to choose a centre to provide external quality assurance services, and undergo external review every five years. The external quality assurance processes are outlined in General guideline 1076/KTKDDCGD-KDDH. This guideline outlines the establishment of external evaluation group, roles and responsibilities, process, and reporting.

How the centre for accreditation implements the guideline may vary and at this stage panels do not have a strong specialized knowledge of specific sectors. Further capacity development is required.

Currently not many institutions and programmes have been accredited under international criteria especially at the institutional level.

Internal quality assurance

The Law on Higher Education 08/2012 indicates that universities are responsible for quality assurance including:

- Establishing a specialised unit for quality assurance

- Formulating plans for quality assurance

- Actively assessing, innovating and improving education quality, as well as periodically registering for assessment of their programmes and of the institutions

- Sustaining and developing staff, teaching materials, facilities and financial for quality education.

General guideline 1075/KTKDCLGD-KDDH on self assessment of training programs outline the purpose and process of self-evaluation of programmes, including establishing a council and staff for self-evaluation, and outline of the self-assessment report. Self-assessment reports are to be sent to the MOET annually.

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Appendix 3: Acknowledgements

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