

Competency Standards for HR Professionals in Hong Kong

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Developing competency models and standards for all levels of employees in organizations has always been regarded as one of the core competencies of HR professionals. Yet, there are plenty of such models and standards with different underlying theories and concepts that are applied by HR experts in this highly specialized area. Is there one that is acceptable to all in the HR community? The one for Hong Kong, known as Specification of Competency Standards (SCS) was released by the Cross-Industry Training Advisory Committee for Human Resource Management sector (CITAC-HRM) under the Hong Kong Qualification Framework (HKQF) in March 2017. This SCS is open for sector-wide public consultation until 27 June 2017. Full version of the SCS document and the leaflet outlining the HKQF exercise can be downloaded at <https://www.hkqf.gov.hk/hrm/en/scs/introduction/index.html>. The finalized version of SCS for HRM Sector is expected to be completed towards the end of 2017.

What is HKQF

The HKQF is a seven-level hierarchy covering qualifications in the academic, vocational, continuing education and training sectors. It aims to provide a transparent and easily accessible platform to promote lifelong learning and enhance the capability and competitiveness of the local workforce. The ultimate objective is to provide a platform for seamless transition among school education, training and employment. Students and workforce can then develop their careers through vocational qualifications accepted by industries.

Why HKQF for HRM

There are three major reasons for introducing QF for the HRM sector in Hong Kong:

- a. To specify the competency and performance standards of various HRM occupations that are transparent to facilitate further development of the HRM sector;
- b. To promote opportunities for further studies and to articulate the development pathways for learning; and
- c. To recognize workers' prior experience for qualifications to facilitate access to further learning and career progression.

What is Specification of Competency Standards (SCS)

An important task of CITAC-HRM is to draw up Specifications of Competency Standards (SCS) for the relevant industries. SCS is a set of competency requirements and outcome standards of key tasks at various QF levels for a specific industry/sector. It is broken down into Units of Competency (UoCs) that are competency-based with threshold standard. Each UoC is designated a QF level and assigned a credit size.

Uses of SCS

The SCS sets out the skills, knowledge and outcome standards required of employees in different functional areas, and provide a basis for course providers to design training courses to meet the needs of the industries. SCS is used by employers as useful guides for the development of in-house training programmes and human resources management tools, such as for staff recruitment and performance assessment.

SCS for HRM Sector

The SCS for the Human Resource Management (HRM) sector mainly comprises of the competency standards required for the present operations and the future developments of the sector. It consists of 208 Units of Competency (UoCs) which are distributed into 7 major functional areas at various levels.

Functional Area	QF Level							Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1. Organization Development and Human Resource Strategy	-	-	-	1	11	9	4	25
2. Workforce Planning and Resourcing	-	2	2	10	17	3	-	34
3. Reward Management	-	-	1	6	15	5	2	29
4. Talent Management	-	-	2	4	13	8	1	28
5. Human Resource Policies and Processes	-	2	3	12	15	2	-	34
6. Compliance and Risk Management	-	1	5	12	11	5	-	34
7. Employee Engagement	-	-	3	5	8	8	-	24
Total by Functional Area	-	5	16	50	90	40	7	208

(Source: <https://www.hkqf.gov.hk/hrm/en/scs/introduction/index.html>)

Global HRM

One of the important applications of HKQF is that it enables the referencing and/or aligning HKQF with QFs in other places, which can enhance international mobility and articulation of talents from Hong Kong as well as help Hong Kong attract talents from other places. It is hoped that more countries can join this QF journey so that a universally recognized SCS for HRM that transcends borders can be established in the not-too-distant future for the benefits of the HR professionals globally.