East Asia Summit Meeting on Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in the Asia Pacific Imperial Hotel, Bangkok-23-25 June 2011

“National Qualifications-Development, Implementation, Issues, Barriers and Solutions-the Malaysian Case”

Zita Mohd Fahmi
Outline

A. Evolution in Higher education and quality assurance
   – Legal framework for Higher education and QA
   – Accreditation and recognition

B. National Higher Education Strategies 2007-2010 and 2011-2020

C. Quality & Qualifications Framework & MQA

D. Addressing the 2009 Revised Regional Convention - initiatives, tools, issues and barriers
A. A Maturing Higher Education and Training System
Evolution in HE and QA

Pre 1996
- MOE-regulator
- QA – internal matter of HEIs
- Recognition - Public Service Department & Professional Bodies

1996-2007
- Implementation of 6 Acts
  - Public and Private HE
- LAN – programme accreditation
- 2002-2003 development of QF
- 2002 – QAD for public Universities
- 2004 – new MOHE

2002
- Development of QF
- QAD for public Universities

2004
- New MOHE

2005-2007
- Malaysian Qualifications Agency

2005
- Development of QF

2007
- Moving from MQF to QF

2008 onwards
- Compliance of MQF
- Accreditation & Academic Audits
- Compliance audits
- Rating (SETARA)
- Consolidation and Improvement
- Self accreditation
- 2011-2015 National Higher Educations Strategies Phase 2

2011-2015
- National Higher Educations Strategies Phase 2

2014
- Compliance of MQF
- Accreditation & Academic Audits
- Compliance audits
- Rating (SETARA)
- Consolidation and Improvement
- Self accreditation

2015
- National Higher Educations Strategies Phase 2

2016
- Compliance of MQF
- Accreditation & Academic Audits
- Compliance audits
- Rating (SETARA)
- Consolidation and Improvement
- Self accreditation

2017
- National Higher Educations Strategies Phase 2

2018
- Compliance of MQF
- Accreditation & Academic Audits
- Compliance audits
- Rating (SETARA)
- Consolidation and Improvement
- Self accreditation

2019
- National Higher Educations Strategies Phase 2

2020
- Compliance of MQF
- Accreditation & Academic Audits
- Compliance audits
- Rating (SETARA)
- Consolidation and Improvement
- Self accreditation

2021
- National Higher Educations Strategies Phase 2

2022
- Compliance of MQF
- Accreditation & Academic Audits
- Compliance audits
- Rating (SETARA)
- Consolidation and Improvement
- Self accreditation

2023
- National Higher Educations Strategies Phase 2

2024
- Compliance of MQF
- Accreditation & Academic Audits
- Compliance audits
- Rating (SETARA)
- Consolidation and Improvement
- Self accreditation

2025
- National Higher Educations Strategies Phase 2
Key Higher Education and Training Providers

- Primary and Secondary Education schools (M of E)
- Higher Education (M of HE)
  - 61 Universities (public/private/foreign branch campuses)
  - Teachers Training Institution
  - 400+ Private H E Colleges
  - Polytechnics
  - Community Colleges
  - Wide variety of programmes-local and foreign programmes
- Skills Training (Ministry of Human Resource)
- MARA
- Professional bodies-licensing exams
- Public Service Dept
- Industry & Others++
Consolidation-Higher Education & Training Institutions Legal Environment

- Education Act 1996
- Universities and University Colleges Act 1996
- Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996
- National Higher Education Funding Authority 1997
- 2004 establishment of Ministry of Higher Education
- National Skills Development Authority Act 2006
- Succeeded by the Malaysia Qualifications Agency Act 2007
- Various Act of Parliament - Professional bodies and a Skills Authority
National Strategies

Economic Revenue

Regional Education Hub

Education Access

Human Capital

Upgrading Higher Education

Quality Assurance
“Enhancing” of Higher Education and Training Sector

- Phase 1 National Higher Education Strategies Plans 2007-2010 set policies, amendments of the Acts, directives and initiatives
  - Access and Equity
  - Quality of Teaching and Learning
  - Research and Innovation
  - Strengthening of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
  - Internationalisation
  - Lifelong Learning
  - MoHE Delivery System

- Phase 2 NHESP 2011-2015 –continued focus on quality of Higher Education - Human Capital and high income earning nation- ETP/KPIs /OBB/NKRAs

- Hence continued demand for quality- Quality assurance, accreditation and recognition
Accreditation is an evaluation process which leads to a certification of a programme and qualification indicating compliance to the set standards of the accrediting authority. (MQA)

Accreditation of a programme generally leads to recognition - 1 for 2 (or 3) arrangement.

Recognition has largely been a unilateral decision

- for specific purpose-employment, practice, loans, admission & by specific parties

Accreditation=recognition of qualifications by professional bodies (e.g. Eng. Medicine, Pharmacy)
Skills Authority accredits skills qualification (NOSS)

Foreign Qualifications

- Unilateral recognition acts or
- May be arranged through G to G or Bilateral / multilateral negotiations for recognition of qualifications
- Engaging other QA bodies in MRA discussions of accreditation decisions
  - ASEAN Professional Services - liberalisation allowing recognition and mobility

NB. Changing role of MQA and Dept. of Public Service (JPA)- MQA as the assessment body.
B. Ensuring Quality of Higher Education - Quality Framework
Phase 1 (2007-2010)
Phase 2 (2011 onwards)
Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007 (01/11/07)

MQA Council- the Agency-Assessors- Partners

• Functions
  – The Malaysian Qualifications Framework
  – Standards
  - Accreditation of programmes
    • Provisional Accreditation
    • Full Accreditation- home grown, skill qualifications, foreign, Self accreditation, professional qualifications, branch campuses and APEL
  – Training and local/international liaison
  – Equivalency of qualifications
  – Malaysian Qualifications Register
  – Institutional audits-Procedure
  – Appeals
Importance of Local and International Engagement - MQA

- **All Local parties** - acceptance of MQF and incorporating good QA practices - “Confidence”
- **Bilateral understanding** – capacity building, sharing and towards mutual arrangement for recognition (MOC/MOUs)
- Promoting **Quality** as premise of recognition
- **Key player in 2 Networks** - AQAN, ACCAWIC
- **Member of** International network - INQAAHE & APQN
QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

1. MQF

2. Standard Setting

3. Quality Audits

Reference Centre

Internal Quality System of Higher Education Providers

International Practices & Collaborations

Stakeholders Consultations

Partnership with Professional Bodies

Expert Peer Review

General Public

MQA ..We Nurture Confidence
Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) S. 35 MQA Act 2007 work in progress “Equivalency- Substantial Difference?”
Establish a Common Qualifications Framework –”Realignment”

- **Why?**- Internal factors & pressures – dual QA practices, diverse norms in qualifications, higher education revolution” to meet national needs
- **When?**- Begin 2002 -2003 & approved in 2005
- **How?**- Exploratory work 2002 & consultations and national seminar 2003
- **Who?**- Involved variety of key stakeholders - 21 consultations
- **Referred to** Bologna process, NZQF, UK and Scottish Framework
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MQF Level</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Technical &amp; Vocational Education &amp; Training</th>
<th>Malaysian Skills Qualifications (NOSS)</th>
<th>Pre University Education</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12-13 years of education (bachelor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Higher Secondary/STPM / Foundation (1-2 yrs)</td>
<td>11 years (diploma &amp; certificate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Certificate (3)</td>
<td>Certificate (3)</td>
<td>Certificate (3)</td>
<td>Senior Secondary –SPM (2 years)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Certificate (2)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Certificate (1)</td>
<td>Junior Secondary (3 years) (PMR)</td>
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<td>ZPV</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Malaysian Qualifications Framework - objectives S. 35 MQA Act

• Assist programme design and clarifies qualifications based on nationally agreed and internationally benchmarked practices
• National sovereignty - clear domestic policies
• Clarifies qualifications – levels, sectors (Skills, TVET & Academic), learning outcomes credit systems (recognition and mobility)
• Integrate and link all qualifications, supporting credit transfers, flexible pathways, includes accreditation of prior learning
• Core generic skills & supports lifelong learning
## Malaysian Qualifications Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>MGC*</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Vocational &amp; Technical</th>
<th>Academic</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Doctoral</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Masters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Dip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Cert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate Dip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate Cert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Certificate 3</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Certificate 2</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Certificate 1</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accredited Prior Experiential Learning

28-Jun-11
Learning Outcomes Descriptors Provided for Each Level

- 1. Knowledge of discipline areas
- 2. Practical skills
- 3. Social skills and responsibility
- 4. Values, attitudes and professional
- 5. Communications, leadership and team skills
- 6. Problem solving and scientific skills
- 7. Managerial and Entrepreneurial skills
- 8. Information management and life long learning skills
Definition - MQF Credit System

Credit = the measurement of student academic load (for LOs)

Student Learning Time (SLT)

Measurement: 40 hours of notional learning time = 1 credit

The quantitative measure of all learning activities

Lecture, tutorial, revision, self-study, research, discussion, coursework/assignments, assessments and preparation for assessments, co-curriculum...
Expanded by Programme Standards and Guides to Good Practice

• Provides programme profiles – specific to disciplines and by levels- LOs, credits, entry & QA requirements

• Programme Discipline Standards - certificate to doctoral programmes

• Various GGP in programme design & delivery, student assessment, accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning, ODL, Credit systems
Impact of MQF to Malaysian QA Systems and Practices

- National to global
- External QA to Internal QA
- Quality control to quality enhancement
- Interlinked
- Student centered and Outcomes focus
- Developmental approach
- Collaboration
- Flexibility
- Recognition, mobility and portability (credits/qualifications)
- Dynamic – amendable by national consensus
Quality Assurance of Qualifications

IQA & EQA

“Accreditation (Voluntary Compliance/ & Guided Autonomy”
The Quality Assurance Process

• Standards: 9 Areas of quality assurance standards - intend to strengthen Institutional Quality Assurance system- CQI

• Provisional Accreditation & Full Accreditation
  – Self review (internal quality audit) conducted by the Higher Education Providers
  – Site visit

• Peer review (external quality audit) conducted by the MQA’s Panel of Assessors (POA)

• Periodical assessments - maintenance audits

• Academic Audits

• Self accreditation institutions- 8 universities (2010)
QUALITY AUDIT CYCLE

**PROVISIONAL Accreditation**

**Ministry’s Approval**

**FULL Accreditation - perpetual /cession date**

**INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT SELF ACCREDITATION SETARA**

**PROGRAM**

**MONITORING**

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SYSTEMIC QUALITY CARE

Input
- Governance & Administration
- Program Design
- Academic Staff
- Student Selection
- Edu Resources

Transformation
- Program Delivery
- Student Support Service
- Student Assessment
- Program Monitoring & Review

Output
- Student Grades & Graduate
- Monitoring Feedbacks & Program Review Report

External Stakeholders

Continuous Quality Improvements

Feedbacks

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# The Nine (9) Malaysian QA Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision, Mission, Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Curriculum Design and Delivery</th>
<th>Assessment of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Selection and Support Services</td>
<td>Academic Staff</td>
<td>Educational Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Leadership and Administration</td>
<td>Programme Monitoring and Review</td>
<td>Continual Quality Improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KEY CODES & PROGRAMME STANDARDS ++
(Finally) The Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQR) nurturing a national information center of accredited qualifications and institutions
Guide

- Search can be done using a keyword or a combination of keywords.
  Example of search: Diploma in Computer Science program
  (1) Type Computer Science in the Name of Qualification column
  (2) Choose Diploma at Type of Qualification column
  (3) Click on Search button

Searching by keyword:

Reference Code: Part of Programme Code (e.g.: A4567)
Name of Qualification: Part of Qualification Name
Name of the Institution: Part of Institution Name
Field of Study: Part of Field Name
Type of Qualification: All Levels
Level of Qualification: All Levels
Location: All States

Search
Equivalency Evaluation Services

• Generally to support admission and employment competencies
• Application for a process for evaluation of a qualification is provided by MQA Act (s.78) for equivalency. Statement of equivalency can be referred for employment of practice but not legally binding.
• By referencing to UK NARIC & other sources
• Or fresh evaluation – a search and analysis -discipline, approval of programme /valid awarding body, stated /defined programme outcomes, entry requirements, pathways, comparable programme;
• Assessing equivalency- course learning outcomes? Range and dept of course content, learning time? Level of cognitive complexity/references to Bloom taxonomy? Expectation of examiners/reviewers; depth and breadth of assessment?
• **MQF - learning Outcomes**

In Principle the benefits are clear
Do-ability?

To establish internal regulatory and administrative system to do the following:

1. Assessment and recognition system for foreign qualifications
2. Central and competent authorities
3. Assessment system for recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation
4. National information centre
5. Preparation for implementation of UNESCO Diploma Supplement
6. Promotion and explanatory sessions to stakeholders
## Selective Key Terms (Section 11)

### The Revised Convention

- **Recognition of qualifications** - a formal acknowledgement by a competent authority of the value of a formal qualification with a view to giving access to educational and/or employment activities.
- Accreditation - a process of assessment and review that enables a higher education programme or institution be recognised or certified as meeting appropriate standards.
- **Access** - Right to apply and be considered.
- **Admission** - Higher education programmes – education, training and research.
- Non traditional Qualifications.

### Domestics arrangements

- Comparable interpretation of recognition accept need to relate to admission to higher education.
- Equivalency assessment a form of advice which is non binding for employment or practice.
- Acceptable definition.
- Eligibility to apply and be given fair considerations?
- Higher education as described “post secondary” education. Admission at various levels.
**Presence of Central authority and Competent parties** (Section 11 and 111)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Convention</th>
<th>Domestic Arrangements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Central authority/Competent parties - body officially charged with making decisions on the recognition of foreign qualifications  
• May includes higher education institutions | • Malaysian Qualifications Agency to assess for **General Requirements** for access ( & national policies)  
• Higher educations for **Specific Requirement**  
• Professional bodies may set criteria for entry |

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## Principles Related to Assessments of Qualifications (Section III)

### Revise convention
- Adequate access to assessment
- Appropriate arrangements for assessment for recognition of qualifications solely on the basis of knowledge and skills achieved
- Transparent, coherent and process
- Adequate information from applicant or may request info from awarding institution
- An appeal process

### Domestic Arrangements
- Application for a process for evaluation of a qualification is provided by MQA Act (s.78) for equivalency.
- MQF provides for C,P,E domains
- MOHE -GSA & soft skills
- No provision for appeals on equivalency statement. Must provide for such appeal
# Recognition of Qualification-Access

(Section IV)

## Revised Convention

- Shall recognise for general requirement... unless a substantial difference can be shown between the general requirement for access...of the parties;
- May impose additional specific requirements or provide for access for the additional requirements;
- Art iv.5 provides for policy on restrictions and selectivity but also impose principles of fairness and non-discrimination
- Language competencies
- Non-traditional modes

## Domestic Arrangement

- Authenticity of qualifications & conferring institution
- Principles in equivalency assessment –MQF
- Assessment - inputs and outcomes-entry, durations, credit, content, types of assessments, grades, validity
- Resources for reference –National policy, UK NARIC, CEP (Aus) and research
- Language competencies acceptable
- Same assessment though different learning mode
## Recognition of Period of Study

(Section V)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revised Convention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provides for recognition of periods study completed from another party leading towards completion of a programmes unless substantial differences are shown;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Or assessment of the period of study only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilitate such recognition-agreements between the parties or HEI and issuance of a certificate to attest the successful completion of such period</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic arrangements</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Generally acceptable. Through clear agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mobility of students are strongly encouraged and supported. Student exchange or under mobility programmes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (Section VI)

**Revised Convention**

- To the extent that recognition decision is based on skills and knowledge certifies... each party shall recognise unless a substantial difference can be shown...

- Art VI.2...to obtain an assessment of the qualification subject to the above provision

- Art VI.3 provides that consequences of recognition (a) access to further as nationals of the receiving party; (b) use of an academic titles subject to the laws of the party in which recognition is sought such recognition may facilitate access to labour market.

**Domestic Arrangements**

- Developing clearer published protocol for equivalency assessment & use of titles

- Trained assessors
# Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (Section VI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revised Convention</th>
<th>Domestic Arrangements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Art. VI.4 An assessment... of a qualification may take the form of advice: (a) for general employment purpose; (b) for admission to an educational institution © to any other competent authority</td>
<td>• Entry policies to higher education programmes clarified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Art VI.5 Make recognition of a foreign qualification contingent upon specific National requirements or specified agreements concluded between them.</td>
<td>• Facilitate by agreement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Policy Issues
4 Key Issues-Interpretation & national policy

1. Restrictions & Selectivity Policy (Article IV.5)
   (regulation of student recruitment in certain universities (e.g. UiTM Act 2000 and Article 153, Constitution of Malaysian)

2. ‘Substantial difference’ is not defined
   *A generally practiced and may be justified.

3. Assessment for recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation-unclear
   -National policy issue
   -The 1951 Refugee Convention – Malaysia is not a signatory country
   *Subject to national policy and legal interpretation

4. “and/or” Assessment of the qualification issued may take the form of advice for general employment purposes
   (Section VI-Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications, Article VI.4)
   *Subject to legal interpretation
Thank you : Terima kasih

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