

Chapter 2

Continuing Professional Development and the Philippine Qualifications Framework: A Way Forward to Mutual Recognition Arrangements

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ABSTRACT

The Philippines is unique among the ASEAN member states (AMS) in implementing its continuing professional development (CPD) policy among its professionals. It is the only AMS that requires CPD compliance for the renewal of the Professional Identification Card of its professionals. For that matter, it is the only country in the ASEAN that requires graduates of Library and Information Science to take and pass a licensure examination before they can practice the profession. The Bachelor's degree in LIS also has a common curriculum for all the schools offering the degree as mandated by the Commission on Higher Education except for autonomous higher education institutions. The chapter discusses the laws, practices, and issues that affect the practice of librarianship in the Philippines and how CPD impacts the ASEAN Qualifications Framework (AQR), career progression and eventually the Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRA) among ASEAN member countries.

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BACKGROUND

The Philippines is a signatory to the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS) signed by the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Economic Ministers (AEM) of the Member States on December 15, 1995, during the 5th ASEAN Summit in Bangkok, Thailand. Article V of the AFAS provides for the mutual recognition of the “education or experience obtained, requirements met, or licenses or certifications granted in another ASEAN Member State (AMS) for the purpose of licensing or certification of service suppliers. Such recognition may be based upon an agreement or arrangement with the AMS concerned or may be accorded autonomously” (ASEAN, 2012).

In November 2012, the AEM signed the ASEAN Agreement on Movement of Natural Persons (MNP) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The MNP became operational on June 14, 2016. An important area related to MNP is the Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) which provides for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications among the AMS (Movement of Natural Persons, [2015]).

Executive Order No. 83, s. 2012 was issued by the Office of the President on October 1, 2012. The Executive Order institutionalized the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF). Subsequently, the Philippine Congress enacted Republic Act No. 10968, or the “Philippine Qualifications Framework Act,” on January 16, 2018. It had the following objectives: 1) To adopt national standards and levels for outcomes of education; 2) To support the development and maintenance of pathways and equivalencies, which, provide access to qualifications and assist people to move easily and readily between the different education and training sectors and between these sectors and the labor market; and 3) To align the PQF with international qualifications framework to support the national and international mobility of workers through increased recognition of the value and comparability of Philippine qualifications. The PQF Act also established the PQF National Coordinating Council (PQF-NCC). It also mandated the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) to review the framework and contents of the licensure examination of each profession, and align them with the PQF. The PQF is a collaborative program of the Department of Education (DepEd), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), CHED and the PRC.

Recognizing the differences in National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) and the varying development stages among the AMS, the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRf), was developed to support and enhance the National Qualifications Frameworks of the AMS. The AQRf was endorsed by the AEM on August 2014, with the following as its objectives: 1) support recognition of qualifications; 2) encourage the development of qualifications frameworks that can

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