

**Response to the Proposal of Establishing a  
Unified Information and Communications  
Technology  
Professional Recognition Framework in Hong Kong**

Submitted by  
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This document seeks to express the views from the Institute for Entrepreneurship (IfE) of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) on the Government's initiative of establishing a unified information and communications technology (ICT) professional recognition framework in Hong Kong (the Proposed Framework). As a dedicated arm of PolyU committed to support sustainable growth of Hong Kong via the provision of professional services in human capital development, IfE has been working closely with the Hong Kong Education Bureau and the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic & Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) to promote Qualification Framework (QF) and actively engaging in different QF initiatives, including the development of Specifications of Competency Standards (SCSs), design and delivery of sector-specific training programmes, and assistance for enterprises to develop quality assurance mechanisms to administer QF-related trainings.

Overall, the IfE of PolyU is supportive of the Proposed Framework. Our views are summarised below:

### **1. Positioning of the Proposed Framework**

The Proposed Framework will ideally complement the QF so that the two initiatives serve distinctly different but inherently supportive roles, namely ICT-specific articulation pathways via the attainment of professional qualifications and network of continuous learning pathways for competence development.

There are a number of ways which the two can complement each other. For instance, leveraging the already established SCS for the ICT sector, mapping of SCSs, which have been well agreed upon by industry, against professional qualifications is possible. Such mapping is expected to benefit different stakeholders. For learners and industry practitioners, the mapping will illustrate at competence level how they can prepare themselves for the qualifications. For awarding bodies of professional qualifications, the mapping will help them promote their schemes. For the QF, the mapping demonstrates an effective utilization of SCSs. There is yet another benefit for the QF to realize further. This Proposed Framework will reference international schemes such as SFIA, so that feedback can be provided to the QF to enhance existing SCS to make it more comprehensive and practical for the sector.

Another logical but essential complementary linkage between the two is automatic mutual recognition of QF qualifications, i.e. the Proposed Framework will include QF qualifications in its pathways and *vice versa*. This arrangement will avoid duplicating efforts of QF course providers and save resources.

Introducing cross-sectoral pathways and references to encourage recognition of professional qualifications related to ICT applications and management in other sectors, such as retail, banking, logistics, etc, is a third example that demonstrates the complementary functions of the two initiatives. Most SCSs of these industries have dedicated sections for ICT applications. The references can leverage these developed SCSs and support employers in enhancing their understanding and awareness of ICT knowledge, technology changes and trends for human resource development and deployment.

## **2. Defining roadmap for professional development**

As a leading digital city, Hong Kong will need to develop an integrated framework, tailored to our regional ICT strategy, whereby the standards of different ICT qualifications and competencies can be easily accessible. The Proposed Framework is specially designed to serve this purpose. While ICT itself represents an industry sector, it is also an integral function across different sectors. Two major types of advancements in ICT are possible: technological/technical developments and innovative application developments in various disciplines. Professional development, i.e. career and/or academic advancement, can potentially be geared towards these two directions. The Proposed Framework is expected to cover the entire spectrum of ICT disciplines in Hong Kong, with clearly defined sets of attributes, referencing schemes such as SFIA, which demonstrate where the pathways are leading, e.g. a specific qualification may be ideal for those who are interested in pursuing a career in infrastructure development of business applications.

## **3. Encouraging innovative multi-disciplinary ICT applications**

Effort should be made to promote the Proposed Framework to the young generation, especially to university students and graduates from non-ICT disciplines such as multimedia, marketing, design, etc. The objective is to attract young and talented people to support innovative multi-disciplinary ICT applications, eg. user experience design, cloud-enabled professional services. While ICT professional qualifications may not be applicable to non-ICT practitioners, promotion of professional qualifications related to ICT applications may appear as inspiration and subsequent incentives to encourage their involvement.

## **4. Promoting new technologies**

The world of ICT is moving fast. Periodic reviews of the latest professional qualifications and emerging trends in new areas/technologies are deemed necessary. A comprehensive review of the Proposed Framework in 3 to 5 years' time is also recommended.

## **5. Leveraging existing expertise to support assessment**

An independent and professional assessment process in recognizing ICT professional qualifications is critical to ensure that the Proposed Framework is fair, unbiased and neutral. Expertise and resources from independent statutory bodies such as higher education institutes or HKCAAVQ should be leveraged to assess the applications.

## **6. Providing financial aids to higher education institutes and professional bodies**

A funding scheme can be created to support the applications from the higher education sector and professional bodies to recognise their courses/programmes, ie. their awarded qualifications, through the predefined assessment criteria. The funding

support will encourage quality and professional qualifications, especially in the first few years after the launching of the Proposed Framework.

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