

Philippine Higher Education External Quality Assessment:

A Handbook on Licensure, Certification, and Accreditation

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Introduction

The economic growth of a country highly depends on its human resources. The World Bank defines human capital as consisting of the knowledge, skills, and health that people invest in and accumulate throughout their lives, enabling them to realize their potential as productive members of society (*Human Capital Project*, n.d.). In fact, the World Development Report (WDR) 2019 claims that the country's human capital approximates the nation's sustained and inclusive economic growth. Hence, strengthening the human capital through good education, training and other means is a slow investment to human resources to influence the sustainable development of the economic growth of the countries (Canals, 2018; Pelinescu, 2014; Sulaiman, Bala, Tijani, Waziri, & Maji, 2015).

In response to such global economic trends, NEDA crafted the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) for 2017-2022, that curated specific plans and strategies of the government as stipulated in the country's vision, Ambisyon Natin 2040 (Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022, n.d.). Furthermore, PDP defines the acceleration of human capital as a strategy to emphasize developing the attributes and qualities of skilled professionals (Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022, n.d.). Additionally, the Philippine government staged the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) as a quality assurance system for the development, recognition and award of qualifications based on standards of knowledge, skills and values acquired in different ways and methods by learners and workers of the country. The PQF describes the levels of educational qualifications and sets the standards for qualification outcomes (Philippine Qualifications Framework, n.d.).

Accordingly, the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) used the aforementioned policies [PDP 2017-2022] and standards [PQF], and combined these with a new education paradigm, Outcome-Based Education, to institute the commission's school typology and new policies, standards and guidelines (PSGs) for all courses. This scheme resulted in the revision of all program/courses to be OBE-compliant, with defined program and learning outcomes consistent with the demands of PQF. However, these strategies may not be enough to assure an accelerated and skilled human capital development. Hence, external quality assessment (EQA) mechanisms may be adopted to ensure attainment of targets in terms of human capital. The World Health Organization (WHO) describes EQA to refer to all kinds of organisational or individual reviews which use written standards as a quality assurance mechanism (Montagu, 2003).

Among the list of EQA, this handbook will focus on three quality assessments for individuals: Licensure, Certification, and Accreditation. The handbook includes four chapters to accommodate topics from the descriptions and definitions of the identified EQA to job search to help graduates in their quest for a post in the workforce 4.0. The handbook also explores national efforts to EQA in the now or new normal.

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Strengthening the human capital through good education, training and other means is a slow investment to human resources to influence the sustainable development of the economic growth of the countries.

Chapter 1

Definitions and Descriptions



This chapter presents the descriptions of external quality assessments sourced from stakeholders through a Delphi Survey and from available literature as confirmed by the former. The chapter includes an extensive definition of the three identified external quality assurance: Licensure, Accreditation and Certification. Furthermore, the chapter discusses relevant and specific EQA in the Philippines customized to the different curricular offerings of the Commission on Higher Education. This

discussion extends to their significance to newgraduates, and how they impact the job search and the profession.

Licensure

Description of Licensure

Licensing or licensure is a process by which a governmental agency grants time-limited permission to an individual to engage in a given occupation after verifying that he or she has met predetermined and standardized criteria (usually education, experience, and examination) (Hummel, 2022; Rooney & van Ostenberg, 1999). The goal of licensure is to ensure that the licensees have the minimal degree of competency necessary to ensure that public health, safety, welfare, etc. are protected. To become licensed, one usually has to meet eligibility requirements and pass an assessment covering a broad range of knowledge and skills, usually at the entry-level. There are typically ongoing requirements that need to be met to maintain the license (continuing professional

development [CPDs], retests, physical exams, etc.) (PRC Vision/Mission, n.d.)

Relevant Licenses in the Philippines

Different fields do have and recognize different Licensing (e.g., Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers [LEPT], Chemists, Psychometricians, Guidance Counselors, Psychologists, Health and **Applied** Professionals, Engineers, Social Workers). Other fields do not adopt Licensing after collegiate schooling, but do recognize other external quality assurance mechanisms in specific tract or aspect. For example, Professional Operational Maritime Licenses include and Management Level (Masters / Chief Engineers etc).

Licensure Examination to a New Graduate

Licensure may be considered as one of the marks of a professional. It is a standard recognized by employers and their clients, by governments and by the public as an assurance of dedication, skill, and quality. It should be noted however, that there are professions that recognize accreditations, instead of licensure. Others do not even have licensure standards, but implement other schemes

of professionalization like credentialing and

A new graduate should prepare his/herself holistically (physically, mentally) when planning to take the licensure examination. A new graduate should know that a licensure examination is typically a multiple choice test format in most courses (except for BAR exam). The examination for mathematics-related courses include items on problem solving. For tourism, items on skills development dominate the test. This examination is a measure of the learning outcomes and competencies. This means that it will still be content heavy. Note that this examination is a measure of minimum level of competencies and skills acquired and developed from completed degree programs.

How does Licensure affect Credentialing?

A credential is an umbrella term used for many types of programs. It is an attestation of qualification, competence, or authority issued to an individual by a third party with a relevant or de facto authority or assumed competence. Credentialing assesses an individual's background and legitimacy to meet predetermined and standardized criteria. Individuals,

organizations, processes, services, or products may be credentialed.

Licensure on Job Hunting and Professional Standing

Licensure is a quality assurance mechanism for individual professional practice. Having a license suggests that one has the standard competencies to practice one's profession. Licenses show that a person has the specific knowledge and skill needed to do a job. It also means that the practice of the profession is governed by law; hence, the practitioner is liable for his actions. Licensure helps provide better credentialing lenses in terms of competence of the person in the professional community and by the public. They can be an investment of time and resources and provide recognition for an individual's specialized knowledge or skill set, which can be a significant benefit when landing certain jobs, serving clients, or completing projects.

A license is an evidence declaring that a job applicant has the knowledge, competency and proficiency in performing the job requirements. A license may be a predictor of success in job application in most professions. Other jobs may not require a license, but need specific or specialized skill sets. Having a license and with years of professional experience will probably allow one to secure higher salaried positions.

New graduates who have a completed degree to show as credentials, but no license yet, can still apply and secure a job, but these are jobs that do not require a license to practice, or entry-level jobs such as when one serves as an assistant to a certified public accountant.

Licensure as Part of Preparing to be a Professional: What should new graduates know?

Being licensed provides additional credentials when applying for a job. Although securing a license is a tedious process since the procedure will require several documentary requirements, it is also very self-fulfilling.

Preparations for being Licensed include:

 Identifying available review centers that accommodate flexibility between work and review in preparation for the board examination;

- 2. Determining the documentary requirements needed for the board examination;
- 3. Determining the deadline of applications for the board examination;
- 4. Being physically and emotionally prepared;
- 5. Be mindful that some job vacancies require license to practice, most especially in clinical, industrial, and in teaching.

Continuing to be a Professional

Be reminded too that there is a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirement for the renewal of the license, hence it is necessary that a professional would/should continuously upgrade his/her competencies through professional development training (Continuing Professional Development. Act of 2016, n.d.).

Accreditation

Description of Accreditation

Accreditation is also a voluntary process by which an accrediting agency grants a time-limited recognition or credential to an organization or individual after verifying that predetermined and standardized criteria are met (Hummel, 2022; Rooney & van Ostenberg, 1999. "Accreditation also refers to the formal or official approval granted to a person, a program or an organization, upon meeting essential requirements of achievement standards, including qualifications or unit(s) of a qualification, usually for a particular period of time, as defined by an accrediting agency" (Continuing Professional Development, Act of 2016, n.d., Section 3). Accreditation is voluntary; however, sometimes, it becomes so important that it can be considered quasi-mandatory.

Relevant Accreditations in the Philippines

The concept of accreditation in the Philippines includes organization accreditation (e.g., higher education institutions and private basic education). Accreditation also applies to promotion in State Colleges and Universities (SUC) to "Professor" academic rank.

Accreditation may also apply to several professions (e.g., maritime). Other fields such as the medical field have Occupational Safety Accreditation. Accreditation as an external quality assurance mechanism is also popular in the Tourism industry. In fact, recent developments are lined up in the Department of Tourism (DOT) to futureproof the tourism industry in the country. Accreditation, seems to encompass the nature of future-proofing protocols and processes in DOT that it expands from individual (being a tour guide and tour operator) to establishments (travel and tour businesses). Details of accreditation processes be accessed may https://philippines.travel/accreditation (Department of Tourism, n.d.).

Accreditation in the *Maritime Field* includes varied processes and documentation requirements. For Masters and Officers, the documentary requirements include:

- Medical examination, particularly eyesight (including color vision) and hearing examinations from a Department of Health (DOH) accredited hospital or clinic;
- 2. Documentary evidence of service on board vessels of 250 gross register tons (GRT) or more;

- 3. Have an approved length of sea-going service in the deck department as follows:
 - a. Master Mariner two (2) years as Chief
 - b. Chief Mate one (1) year as Second Mate
 - c. Second Mate one (1) year as Third Mate
 - d. Third Mate one (1) year as Apprentice mate
- 4. Seaman's Service Record Book as proof of the applicant's sea service; and
- 5. Certificates of training.

For Engine Officers, the documentary requirements include:

- Medical examination, particularly eyesight (including primary color vision/perception) and hearing examinations from a DOH-accredited hospital or clinic;
- 2. Evidence of service on board a sea-going ship powered by main propulsion machinery of 750 kw propulsion power or more

- 3. Have an adequate length of approved sea-going service as follows:
 - a. Chief Engineer two (2) years as Second Engineer
 - b. Third Engineer one (1) year as Fourth Engineer
 - c. Fourth Engineer two (2) years as Apprentice
- 4. Seaman's Service Record Book shall serve as proof of the applicant's sea service.

Accreditation on Job Hunting and Professional Standing: Accreditation as part of preparing to be a professional: What should new graduates know?

For accreditation, one must study the set of standards and know when and how to apply them. Understanding why such standards were set facilitates the process since it is viewed as important and therefore, inherent in the practice.

Certification

Description of Certification

Certification is a voluntary process by which a governmental or non-governmental agency grants a recognition to an individual after verifying that he or she has met predetermined and standardized criteria.

Relevant Certifications in the Philippines

In most fields, there are no prominent certifications except for those who take Certificate in Teaching Program, if industry professionals (e.g., engineers, nurses etc.) would like to serve as a Licensed Teacher in the basic education (elementary, high school and senior high school) and even in the tertiary level. Certifications, however, are required for Senior High School teachers of Technical-Vocational Education and Training (TVET) tracks. Individuals who would like to traverse this path may check all the requirements which may be accessed through TESDA website. However, there are other professions that grant Certificate of Internship (e.g., medical field).

Certain professions or programs recognize the framework of certification from other countries. Tourism and Hospitality programs adapt certification such as American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institution (AHLEI) for Certified Guest Service Professional (CGSP) (Hospitality and Tourism Management, n.d.), Certified Hospitality Educator (CHE), Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Professional for Certified Tourism and Hospitality Professionals (Institute of Hospitality, n.d.; Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Professionals - Philippines, 2018).

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Some of the relevant certification programs of some institution are those offered by the <u>Technical Education</u> and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Civil Service Commission (CSC), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), TÜV SÜD PSB Philippines, Philippine National IT Standards (PhilNITS) Foundation, International Organization for Standardization (ISO), among others.

Relevant certifications for Maritime Field are known as Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Certificate of Competencies:

- 1. IMO 6.09 for maritime instructors; and
- 2. IMO 3.12 for maritime accessors.

For Electronics and Electrical Engineers:

- 1. Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA);
- Cisco Certified Network Professional CCNP Certification; and
- 3. other related certifications.

How does Certification affect credentialing: Certification on Job Hunting and Professional Standing

Having additional certifications (e.g., in the medical field certificates of subspecialties such as OB, ORtho, Pedia, etc) increases or strengthens the credentials of a professional as it means that are additional competencies that one can display or perform beyond those covered by a written licensure/board exam. An increasing number companies, non-profits, government and organizations that, when working with independent consultants, perceive certifications as additional credentials to the applicant. Certification helps boost one's professional credibility and prestige within one's network, with one's current clients, and when pursuing new business opportunities or bidding on projects.

Certification as Part of Preparing to be a Professional: What should new graduates know?

Certifications are very important because these EQAs will showcase the skills that a professional has. It takes time to have many relevant skills. It takes a lot of perseverance too.

Chapter 2:

Processes and Protocols



This chapter features the processes and protocols in the three identified External Quality Assessment for professionals: Licensure, Accreditation and Certification. The chapter discusses the basic processes a new graduate should be knowledgeable of to be able to go through the aforementioned professionalization. Protocols and processes unique to specific professions -

are also presented to provide a wider perspective for the new graduate.

Basic Processes Students/New Graduates should Expect in Acquiring a License

In general and across all programs that require a licensure, there are three major processes that a new graduate needs to follow:

- 1. Engagement to licensure examination. Most licensure examinations are managed by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) that includes (a) application process and (b) actual examination. For more information on how to secure application forms and other protocols, a new graduate may check the PRC website (https://www.prc.gov.ph/).
- 2. Application for professional registration by the graduate/applicant is done once he/she passed the licensure examination. Once registered

- (initial registration), the professional needs to renew his license every three years.
- 3. Application for renewal of license is also through PRC for most professions, which would require submission of evidence that one has attended continuing professional development (CPD) programs or activities (e.g., training). Note that the number of CPD points required for license renewal depends on the profession.

Basic Processes Students/New graduates should Expect in Acquiring an Accreditation

Accreditation is not common to most professions in the Philippines. From the Delphi survey done, there are accreditations for accountants in order to practice public accountancy. In this example, specialized or CPD training is required in order to be accredited. This protocol is processed in PRC. Please refer to the official website of PRC for detailed information.

Basic Processes Students/new graduates should Expect in Acquiring a Certification

Certification occurs as an additional credential that a professional, who already has a professional license, can take. To become certified, an individual must meet eligibility requirements and pass an examination or assessment. Note that other certifications may be based on the professional portfolio and on the examination.

There are Philippine professions that offer professional certification, other than license. An example of a government agency offering professional certification programs include the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) for policemen. In the certification program for field investigators of PNP, aside from documentation of educational and work profile, candidates need to attend specific training or courses related to the certification.

The certification can be optional but may be needed for promotion to a certain position (as in the case of policemen). In other professions such as in the medical field and social work, internship certification is a requirement before being eligible to take the licensure examination for these professions. It would be good if a government agency would be assigned to regulate certification through a set of standard protocols for all professions. However, the current state shows that certification protocols and processes differ from one profession to another. Please check appropriate and legitimate websites and centers in applying for certifications.

In summary, regardless of the type of certification, students or new graduates should expect the need to:

- 1. Attend training or other professional development activities;
- 2. Attend specialized trainings or professional courses; and
- 3. Prepare for examinations as some certifications in the Philippines (except for those that are not regulated by PRC, e.g. certifications for maritime personnel and safety engineers) require examinations such as for safety engineers.

In the case of Filipino seafarers, professional certifications (issued by MARINA) are normally valid for a limited number of years, based on the pace of change in

the certified profession, and require periodic recertification through reexamination to demonstrate continuing competency as occupational standards of practice evolve or for continuing professional development to demonstrate continually enhanced competency.

Certification and Credentialing

How does certification affect credentialing? A process called credentialing is usually conducted by an employer (most frequently by a hospital or health maintenance organization [HMO]). In most cases, credentialing applies to the medical profession. In this process, the professional is subjected to verification in terms of the required education, training, and experience to practice his/her profession. Credentialing is typically done when a practitioner is first employed with an entity and may be updated periodically (Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, n.d.)

Having additional certifications (e.g., in the medical field, certificates of subspecialties such as OB, ORtho, Pedia, etc.) increase or strengthen the credentials of a professional as it means that there are additional competencies that one can display or perform beyond those covered by a written licensure/board exam. In fact, an increasing number of companies, non-profit, and government organizations that, when working with independent consultants, perceive certifications as additional credentials to the applicant. Certification helps boost one's professional credibility and prestige within one's network, with one's current clients, and when pursuing new business opportunities or bidding on projects.

Required Documentation

Basic Documents Required in Acquiring Credentials on Licensure

In courses or fields that recognize licensing or licensure, the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) administers and facilitates the licensing process that requires several documents. There are common documents required by PRC:

- 1. Transcript of Record [some courses need to present unique specifications]
- 2. NBI Clearance
- 3. PSA Birth Certificate
- 4. PSA Marriage Certificate

PRC requires different eligibility in order for a new graduate to be eligible to take the licensure examination in his/her chosen profession. Below are some examples:

- 1. Guidance Counselor Licensure Examination
 - a. Proof of having a Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling
- 2. Psychometrician Licensure Examination
 - a. Proof of having a degree in BS in Psychology
 - b. Three certificates of Good Moral Character from any of the following duly and signed by the issuing authority and duly notarized under oath:
 - i. Barangay
 - ii. School

- iii. Church
- iv. Employer)
- 3. Psychologist Licensure Examination
 - a. Proof of having a Master's Degree in Psychology
 - b. Three certificates of Good Moral Character from any of the following duly and signed by the issuing authority and duly notarized under oath:
 - i. Barangay
 - ii. School
 - iii. Church
 - iv. Employer
 - c. Mental Health Certification (signed by Registered Psychologist)
 - d. Proof/Certification that the applicant has undergone a minimum of two hundred (200) hours of supervised practicum/internship/clinical experience related to services enumerated in #b (Section 3 of R.A. No. 10029) and under

auspices of a license psychologist or other licensed mental health professional)

- 4. For others like NAPOLCOM certifications
 - a. additional completion of specific courses for certification.
- 5. For Social Workers
 - a. additional requirement of 1000 hours of Field Instruction

Basic Documents Required in Acquiring Credentials on Certification

Most programs consider certification as a document received by a professional after training, after passing a licensure examination, or after obtaining a record of professional practice, an employment record, and scholarly outputs. In the medical profession, certification of internship is issued upon completion of all internship requirements by a student, which serves as a documentary requirement for eligibility to take the licensure examination. There are several professions that recognize global/international certifications. Some of these professions are in maritime, medical field, and

tourism and hospitality. The Maritime Field recognizes Certificate of Competency (COC) and there are many IMO model courses that seafarers have to take for certification. For tourism and hospitality, certifications may be the following:

- American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institution (AHLEI) for Certified Guest Service Professional (CGSP)
- 2. Certified Hospitality Educator (CHE)
- 3. Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Professional for Certified Tourism and Hospitality Professionals).

Medical fields on the other hand require Internship Certification before being eligible to take the licensure examination. Finally, for accountants, engineers and social workers, documentary evidence of training and work and/or examination are required documents for certification.

Basic Documents Required in Acquiring Credentials on Accreditation

Documentary requirements would depend on the category [Organization or Institution Accreditation, accreditation for some professions, accreditation for academic personnel in State Universities and colleges], and the Accrediting body or agencies.

Chapter 3:

Student/New Graduate Preparations and Engagements



The previous chapters presented the details of each of the external quality assessments that students or new graduates would encounter in the future after their baccalaureate. Descriptions and important information about Licensure, Certification, and Accreditation

dominated the discussions in these chapters. Furthermore, protocols and processes related to these three quality assessments for professionalization were also discussed to provide the new graduates with a holistic understanding of their future profession. The current chapter will engage the new graduates to all preparations and engagements they need to do and undergo to successfully hurdle the aforementioned quality assessments.

Professional Portfolio

One possible trick a new graduate can do is to prepare a professional portfolio. This kind of portfolio closely matches the student portfolio which contains all outputs as evidence of development and competence of the student. The difference, however, is that a professional portfolio would include a collection of work and other documents that ideally provide a complete picture of the new graduate's abilities to potential employers (Loreto, 2020). Additionally, this kind of portfolio is a way to document one's professional journey and to demonstrate one's skills and abilities. It can be a collection of one's

work and accomplishments in either a physical or digital format. Although the major documents employers require are the applicant's resume and cover letter, a portfolio is an edge or an advantage in the first interview to give employers an in-depth and tangible summary of your best accomplishments.

Below is a list of things to remember in preparing a portfolio:

- Highlight not only the highest educational attainment but also other additional training and relevant courses.
- Highlight personal qualities and technical and special skills if any.
- Provide relevant co-curricular profile, especially those that highlight leadership qualities, and commitment to work, and community service.
- Emphasize moral grounding and ethical practice. Note that the license is an indicator of professional ethical practice

Student Preparation

Graduation may seem to be the end of the long education journey for us. But, most would consider graduations as ceremonies to commence one's professions. New graduates will engage in activities that will prepare them for the aforementioned external quality assessments to initiate their professions. One would need to prepare to anticipate what will happen in a job interview or job search and hunt for example. Below are tips and suggestions for these significant undertakings in the journey of a new graduate to being a professional.

Documentation and Total Self-Packaging

Before an attempt to search for jobs and subject oneself for interviews, it is important to to prepare all documents while getting everything set. What documents need to be prepared for job search and job interviews?

Preparation/Pre-Interview

One should prepare a concise and well-packaged curriculum vitae or a portfolio that encompasses the applicant's goals, degrees, and skills necessary for the job. Highlight specific skills inherent in a person. Be accurate and honest when furnishing information.

Online Job Hunting Sites: On the side of Job Hunter

When one has already with him/her ready documents, it helps a lot to check online job hunting sites especially during this pandemic. Online Job hunting sites help job hunting be accessible and cheaper. It will provide easier access and information to job vacancies.

Here are famous job hunting sites which you may access:

- 1. Indeed Job Search
- 2. Glassdoor Jobs
- 3. LinkedIn
- 4. Google for Jobs
- 5. Monster
- 6. ZipRecruiter

- 7. Simply Hired
- 8. CareerBuilder
- 9. Snag (Formerly Snagajob)
- 10. LinkUp
- 11. Craigslist Jobs
- 12. US.jobs
- 13. Robert Half
- 14. Job.com
- 15. USAjobs.gov

Advantages of Online Job Search

Online-based employment applications may offer savings to both employers and job seekers. In fact, it lessens the usage of paper in application and can save time and energy. Online job hunting sites prepare the country to cross borders and work in various time zones, even during pandemics, which promotes internationalization and globalization. However, for better results, online job hunting sites can also help and should or may be done together with other means such as:

- Job advertisement in newspaper (print or online), which will cover available positions in government agencies;
- Information from job fairs (school-based or outside);
- Information from the school (e.g. career placement office); and
- 4. Word of mouth, etc.

Online Job hunting Sites: On the Side of the Employer

In most cases, job hunting websites aid the employer to select their ideal employee. Jobstreet is comprehensive, but LinkedIn provides better service for matching. It may also be good to check other job hunting apps or sites for this purpose or one may refer to the aforementioned list. These sites are very useful to HR practitioners, because they can easily match applicants with job design.

Disadvantages of Online Job Hunting Sites

There are also disadvantages of online job search. In most cases, diversities in computer and connectivity access, and/or inequalities in access to technology may give better opportunities to those who have technological access and capabilities. Furthermore, online job search requests data from the hunter, which may subject the hunter to security issues such as concerns on privacy of applicant data. This means that as an applicant, one must first check the authenticity or legitimacy of the online job hunting site or application before lodging personal data. As an advice, one should not limit his search on these job hunting sites. It is advisable though that if one will create a profile, then the profile should be professional and informative enough for potential employers.

Job Interview

The succeeding are pointers for preparation for Job Interviews sourced from the conducted Delphi Survey. Stakeholders and experts from different fields contributed to these advice/suggestions

Preparation/Pre-Interview

In the pre-interview one should prepare a concise and well-packaged curriculum vitae or a portfolio that encompasses the applicant's goals, degrees, and skills necessary for the job. Highlight specific skills inherent in a person. Be accurate and honest when furnishing information.

Things to Remember when planning to be subjected to Job Interview:

The applicant and or the new graduate needs to know or be familiar with the company's background, history and current context of the organization one is applying with. Prepare or anticipate potential questions of interviewers. Bring your prepared resume and cover letter that contain relevant information and are easy to read.

What to do to Prepare

In one's preparation, be sure to review the job description of the position being applied for. If possible, research about the company/institution. One needs to practice for the interview by anticipating the questions of the interviewers and rehearsing your responses to these questions. One should also need to prepare one's own set of questions that one would like to ask the employer.

Make a good impression by dressing appropriately; arriving on or before the scheduled time; and making a powerful introduction. For novice applicants, especially those who recently graduated, the interviewers usually ask about the person's background, one's undergraduate research, laboratory skills, academic strengths and weaknesses, and what one could contribute to the company.

During the Interview

This is the crucial moment, hence one should be well-dressed with proper attire during the interview. When describing one's self, he/she should describe his/her characteristics that would be ideal to the position being applied for. One may also include additional skills which may be interesting and would be able to break the monotony of the interview process. Be confident, be properly dressed, be early, be polite, have a clear and concise response, establish eye contact, clear voice and

facial expression. Given the opportunity, ask insightful questions.

After Interview

Job interviews may really get one to be very nervous. One may feel exhausted and anxious as well. So, after the interview, one may do the following:

- 1. Ask for the next steps and contact information.
- 2. Assess one's interview performance and identify points which may need improvement.
- 3. Write down anything one might want to remember and reflect on them for more insights which one may use in the next interview if there would be.
- 4. Send a thank you note to the hiring manager as well as your supporting documents in case you have not brought them during the interview.
- 5. Get comfortable while waiting.

Chapter 4:

Post Application: The World of Work



Landing a job after an interview is not the end all and be all of being a professional. Instead, it commences the professional journey of the individual. Here are some words of advice from experts in different fields who joined the Delphi Survey.

What Should a New Graduate Expect in the World of Work?

According to a consensus of the experts in the Delphi Survey, work is broader than university. In the workplace, one will be working with a much wider range of people. It is possible that colleagues in the workplace come from a broader range of social and geographic backgrounds. Thus, one should expect challenges, high expectations from the immediate supervisors, numerous tasks that may be assigned, stress, and sometimes bullying.

Expect to find people of all ages, including those who left school at age 16, all the way through to retirement. In the world of work, a lot may be encountered that will give one the fulfilment and enjoyment at work. There may be a chance to meet excellent mentors, and good friends. One may be able to work with kind and appreciative supervisors and co-workers. One may also get high paying jobs.

Work is hard but one may as well choose to enjoy it. Expect that there will be non-stop learning, and that there will be assumptions of bigger responsibility and accountability. In some cases, some of the things learned from school may not be applicable in actual work. Bear in mind that education/college training may have not fully prepared one for the challenges he/she will face at work. Some of such challenges include engaging with difficult colleagues. And appreciate it if some superiors, colleagues, and or subordinates will be friendly and supportive, but this is not the case at all times.

There is also a need to adjust much of working habits in college to actual work. Major adjustment is needed in terms of life outside of work. As a professional, one is expected to demonstrate some level of maturity in the workplace even if one is still young. There might be a chance that people in the workplace will expect more if they have a license, or they graduated with honors, or performed/ranked well in the board exam. Positive attitude and motivation to work will help in coping with the demands of work and the challenges with working with people whose personality may not match theirs.

Be mindful also that one is to be evaluated/judged based on performance so it is important to maintain optimal performance, especially if the work is critical to a department or unit. In fact, one may be required/requested to attend several training/professional development activities and they should embrace these opportunities as part of their professional and career development.

Working as a Professional

Here are some Do's and Don'ts when Working as a Professional:

Do's

- Be mindful that they will face the real world in the industry, focusing on a specific task and that it is very different from the university.
- Have a positive outlook and consider criticisms from colleagues as a way to improve themselves.
- Work experience should be coupled in improving oneself through attending conferences and seminars.
- One is expected to know the culture of the employer/organization.

- Develop good time management skills in practice.
 Some work are overwhelming,
- Always represent oneself in a positive light.
- One is expected to be respectful, professional, diligent worker, and trusted.
- In the world of work, with the numerous people around, it is likely that one will encounter plenty of frustrations, concerns, and issues. It will be helpful to discern between challenges they need to deal with versus. the ones they can overlook and move on from.
- They should know what are the needs of the community in the area of workforce.
- They need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills in their future careers.
- They need to know how to plan for their careers and guide them on how to excel in their field of expertise. They need to attend training.
- The life of a professional may start from being penniless and from working at the bottom. It takes years and hard work to become truly a "professional" in your field.

 Highlight soft skills: sense of leadership, initiative and empowerment, responsibility, loyalty and commitment.

Don'ts

• At the start of the career path, one may not expect a relatively high salary. Neophyte teachers in private schools, for example, normally have a less than Php 20,000 salary. Similarly, chemists with no experience have a less than Php 20,000 salary. But, one needs to identify and develop through professional training his/her unique skills for one to move up the ladder of success.

Professional Development

Professional development (PD) is described as the educational experiences related to one's work (Mizell, 2010). It refers to the training, certification and education that a professional needs to succeed in his or

her career. As a construct, professional development (PD) is really essential, especially for improving one's skills. PD may provide venues for employees to be up-to-date with current and emerging knowledge, technologies, and issues and trends in their disciplines. These programs may ensure that they will have the necessary competencies to effectively and efficiently address the needs and contexts of their clients/customers

Learning never ends, it does not stop after college. We must grow professionally to become experts in the field and to become competent and successful. Both the educational and scientific realm are dynamic. Attending seminars and conferences (as part of Professional Development) allows science-related professionals to interact with field experts and form collaborations.

Professional development is very important and must always be directed toward the growth and improvement of an individual. There must always be an alignment to the skills required of the individual and the skills required of the position. If there is a discrepancy, the individual must be trained to reach those skill sets.

The individual and the job position may not always coincide, but certain people have the required skills or

mindset to be able to perform the tasks, given enough training and advice. Professional Development is a blueprint to one's career. It should give a person a vision on the relevance of his profession in the community and how to cultivate his knowledge and skills professionally. It should guide a professional and drive him to plan and be driven to improve in his career and aim for excellence. Professional development is important to upgrade oneself to be better at work. Through continuing education, professionals can constantly improve their skills and become more proficient at their jobs, and be able to assist others better using one's expertise. Professional development promotes life-long learning and learning to learn that may improve one's professional credentials.

Professional development should not be accounted for as additional expenses because most of the companies are supporting the professional development financially. In fact, it may provide a great return of investment to the institution because an efficient and competent employee is the best and most valuable asset of an institution. In addition, it develops a responsible and morally grounded professional

As a policy (i.e. professional development as a requirement for certification, accreditation, or renewal of license), CPD is important for one's career development, but should be properly implemented and regulated by PRC or by the agencies tasked to implement CPDs of other professions. Mechanisms should be in place to monitor CPD providers to institute quality training of professionals to ensure that professionals are really learning and developing their competencies or skills, rather than simply earning points for certification or license renewal without evidence or tangible outcomes or impacts in their professional competence.

EQA in the New Normal



The term 'new normal' has been proliferating in the field of education and external quality assurance to label the processes that accommodate the intricacies of the defining graduate qualifications in the pandemic and the pre- and post-pandemic. Apparently, Ehler's (2020) definition of the future higher education was something that anticipated the aforementioned scenario that described earning qualifications in alternative means such as through multiple universities, certifications, and

micro credentialing (McGreal & Olcott, 2022). Experts (Brown et al., 2021; Cirlan, & Loukkola, 2020; Debiais-Sainton, 2020; Kato et al., 2020) refer to a micro-credential as an assessment of specific knowledge or skills competencies with defined learning outcomes and may or may not be stacked towards larger units of accreditation. It is something that foreign universities have been investigating and experimenting with to address gaps in the development of skills and competencies of the learners as they progress towards being professionals. McGreal and Olcott (2022) presented the micro-credentialing system as universities' possibilities for the future.

The Philippine Qualifications Framework

The same efforts may be seen as initiatives in the country to achieve skilled and competent Filipino professionals. Referenced from the ASEAN qualifications reference framework (AQRF), the country designed the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) as a paradigm to define the quality assured national system to develop, recognize, and award qualifications based on the

knowledge, skills, and values acquired by the Filipino learners and workforce (Philippine Qualifications Framework, n.d.-b). It is a reference system of national standards of qualifications earned by individuals educated and trained in the Philippines governed by governed by the PQF National Coordinating Council (PQF NCC) composed of the Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Professional Regulations Commission (PRC) and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

Sourced from the PQF document (Philippine Qualifications Framework, n.d.-b), PQF established national standards and levels of qualifications to assist and support academic and worker mobility and to address job skills mismatch. The framework outlines what an individual has learned and can do based on qualification type, levels and degrees of competency. Major goals of the framework are:

- To adopt national standards and levels of learning outcomes of education;
- To support the development and maintenance of pathways and equivalencies that enable access to

qualifications and to assist individuals to move easily and readily between the different education and training sectors and between these sectors and the labor market; and

 To align domestic qualification standards with the international qualifications framework thereby enhancing recognition of the value and comparability of Philippine qualifications and supporting the mobility of Filipino students and workers.

What benefits await Filipinos from PQF?

Aside from describing the levels of educational qualifications, PQF serves to officially recognize a person's learning achievements. It sets the standards for qualification outcomes which are the knowledge or skills gained by students after undergoing a certain learning or educational program. Furthermore, the list of benefits we can get as Filipinos are:

1. PQF provides a standard for the recognition of certificates and licenses that individuals may move and progress through. The framework

- promotes mobility, encourages lifelong learning and builds the workforce's confidence.
- 2. It helps guarantee that these providers adhere to specific benchmarks and are accountable for achieving the same, ultimately ensuring the quality of education and training.
- 3. PQF provides common understanding of policies and guidelines in curriculum/program formulation and implementation, and also allows for the seamless movement and progression of learners to and from different education and training institutions.
- 4. Job mismatch can be reduced and productivity increased. It provides employers with specific training standards and qualifications that are aligned to industry requirements.
- 5. The PQF provides employers immediate information on what a worker can be expected to know and do, and are further assured that qualifications are consistent and are based on standards.

- 6. The framework can help form unity as it harmonizes education and training qualifications in the country by establishing and institutionalizing qualification standards.
- 7. PQF helps policy and planning formulation through comparison with the qualification frameworks of other nations, encouraging the forging of mutual recognition arrangements within the ASEAN and other countries.
- 8. PQF coordinates and balances education and employment opportunities for nation building and holistic economic growth.

Features of PQF

The PQF also features categories such as quality assurance, qualification registrar, pathways and equivalencies and international alignment; that strengthens technical education and consolidates education and employment resources. The site may be accessed at https://pqf.gov.ph/.

Specifically, the Philippine Qualifications Register serves as the national database of quality assured qualifications authorized under the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF). The site, which is accessible at: https://pqf.gov.ph/PhQuaR, provides information to employers, education and training providers and students which they can use in acquiring qualification. The site includes information on the purpose and scope, the national authorities issuing the qualifications, functions and responsibilities of the working group on PhQuar, procedures for listing and updating qualifications in the PhQuar, PhQuar monitoring, and internal and external quality management certification.

The qualification section offers the following information:

- **Qualification code** refers to the PSCED/PSOC codes of the Training Regulations of certain qualification; a qualification that has been completed by a learner in higher education; or a qualification of a specific profession.
- Qualifications is the title of the qualification or programme based on the Training Regulation (TESDA); programs, standards, guidelines

(PSGs)/CHED memorandum orders (CMOs) of CHED, table of specifications (PRC), standards of training, certification and watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) of Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) and Philippine Civil Aviation Regulations (PCAR) of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP).

- Descriptors provide the learning or program outcomes from the three (3) domains of the PQF: knowledge, skills, and values; and degree of independence.
- **Level** labels the PQF level described in the PQF.
- Authority-granting Agency is referenced to the government agency that issues a particular qualification.
- Instrument reflects evidences for issuance of a certain qualification which includes the following: a) TESDA Board Resolutions for Training Regulations; b) CHED Memorandum Orders (CMOs); and c) of the Table of Specifications (TOS) approved by the Commission; d) Standards of Training,

Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) Circular 2018-02 in accordance to the International Maritime Organization (IMO); and e) Philippine Civil Aviation Regulations (PCAR) and through Board Resolution No. 2011-025.

• **Date of Authorization** refers to the date when the qualification was promulgated.

Further information on qualifications may be obtained through the website via its search engine. The search engine is capable of providing the aforementioned information. Please refer to Figure 1 for familiarization with the interface.

Figure 1

Qualification Interface



Source: https://pqf.gov.ph/PhQuaR/Details/7

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Skills, knowledge, and attitude or values may not only be learned within the four walls of the school or a classroom. Much of learners' competencies may be developed through non-formal education. With this increasing recognition of the learning acquired through formal, non-formal, and informal means; many countries have; with the assistance of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and other institutions, sought to implement and established the recognition of prior learning (RPL) systems (UNESCO International Center for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, n.d.). Apparently, sources agree that the RPL process can help individuals acquire a formal qualification that matches their knowledge and skills, and thereby contribute to improving their employability, mobility, lifelong learning, social inclusion and self-esteem. With the system in place, employers are able to access proof of skilled personnel and better match them with suitable jobs, while also increasing productivity. Governments are further able to have better assurances of increased competitiveness and economic growth, as well as social inclusion and equity.

Basically, RPL is described in many countries as follows. In the Philippines, this system is observed in TESDA. Please check TESDA website for more information on RPL in the country.

Table 1

RPL Descriptions from Different Sources

| Source | Description |
|----------------------------------|--|
| UNEVOC/N CVER 2009, Global | An assessment process that assesses the individual's non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning or competency outcomes; May also be referred to as: Accreditation of prior learning; Validation of informal/non formal learning. |

| NCVER 2013, Australia | The acknowledgement of a person's skills and knowledge acquired through previous training, work or life experience, which may be used to grant status or credit in a subject or module. It can lead to a full qualification in the VET sector. |
|-------------------------------|---|
| TESDA 2010, Philippines | The process in which the individual's previous learning outside the formal system which contributes to the achievement of current competency/ies can be assessed against the relevant unit of competency and given recognition through the issuance of appropriate certificate. |
| SAQA 2013, South Africa | The principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development. |

| SADC 2011, Southern Africa | Acknowledgment through evaluation of a person's skills and knowledge acquired through previous training, work or life experience, which may be used to grant credits. |
|----------------------------------|---|
| ILO 2006, Global | Acknowledgement of the knowledge and skills that an individual has acquired in previous training and work or through experience. |

Source: https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/TVETipedia+Glossary/filt=all/id=398

Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation (ETEEAP)

ETEEAP refers to an alternative education program by the Philippine government that allows working professionals, but were either unable to finish their college education or were completely unable to step into college for different reasons, to earn a bachelor's degree without going through traditional schooling methods. The program recognizes the abilities and skills of professionals with five or more years of work experience who can use the knowledge, experiences, achievements and skills they obtained through their jobs to earn school credits. This process is done through equivalencies principle and are then deducted from the total number of units or credits that they are required to earn before they graduate. This way, the more professional experience the ETEEAP students demonstrate, the sooner they can earn their bachelor's degree.

Legal Bases for the Program

The ETEEAP works by virtue of the Executive Order Number 330 signed by former President Fidel V. Ramos on May 10, 1996. Currently, the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) administers and implements the program through deputized and qualified colleges and universities who applied to offer the program. In most cases, ETEEAP has become part of the academic programs of these institutions and graduates are not treated differently from regular students.

Processes of ETEEAP

Students availing ETEEAP are entitled credits upon submission of their application for enrollment. This means that they can enjoy quicker completion of their degrees. In fact, students may gain more than half of all the requirements in their degree upon enrollment which enables them to complete their four-year bachelor's degree between 6 and 18 months. They can even complete a masters degree, normally taken between two and three years, within two or three semesters.

ETEEAP students' professional experiences, knowledge, skills, prior education, work experiences and training, awards and achievements relevant to a course or field under the institution's academic programs are evaluated and used in exchange for academic credits, or in the system called classroom learning credits (CLC).

Classroom Learning Credits (CLCs)

Classroom Learning Credits (CLCs) are awarded for equivalent classroom, laboratory, or workshops normally taken up by regular students. Transfer credits for courses or subjects completed at other colleges or universities (if available) are also awarded using the ETEEAP. The process involves deputized institutions' Academic Review Board (ARB) or the equivalent, who determines the candidates' knowledge, skills, prior education, experience, awards and achievements relevant to a course or field under their academic programs which the students wish to enroll.

Hence, ETEEAP uses equivalent competency standards, a comprehensive assessment system and combined assessment methodologies, to assess the student's previous college level education and experiences. Using this assessment method/process, qualified students are awarded CLCs that reduce the in-classroom time required for graduation. In the ETEEAP system, all subjects and credits or units that gained CLCs from the students' credentials are considered complete. Only the remaining courses or subjects that did not have any equivalent in the evaluation process will be enrolled and should be completed in the traditional way. Other schools offer a blended or online learning system to complete any requirement that was not awarded CLCs. This may be the precursor of the new normal external quality assurance mechanism of the country and the future of tertiary education in the country as envisioned by Ehler (2020). More information on the ETEEAP system can be found

and accessed at <u>CHED website</u> (Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation (ETEEAP), n.d.) and ETEEAP website.

As a benchmark, some colleges in the United States and few other countries have adopted this system using different terminology and under different names but the same principles. Slight differences may be identified such as the requirement to take comprehensive final exams in each subject for which they received a CLC award. Any courses for which the students were not awarded a CLC will be completed in the traditional way.

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