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## Education - Manpower development model: Articulating competence for capacity building of care givers

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# Manpower Development Model:



Articulating Competence for Capacity Building of Care Givers



## Insufficient workforce in health and social care sector

"We need a sufficient supply of adequate healthcare workforce in Hong Kong to cope with the ever-growing ageing population," reported Ms. Pelletier Ho Pui-man, Senior Project Officer (Course Development) of the Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies, "Qualifications Framework will do the trick."

It is a frequently repeated appeal from the social welfare sector to the policy makers in addressing the problem of manpower shortage, especially in auxiliary medical staff such as enrolled and registered nurses, occupational therapists and physiotherapists, which would greatly hamper the quality and provision of elderly and rehabilitation services.

Cases are reported of the poor working condition in many private elderly homes where the care worker/elderly

ratio can be as great as 1 to 20, or in some cases: 1 to 40, among which a significant number of the attentive workers are not trained, not to mention the presence of registered professionals.

Although Mr. Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, Secretary for Labour and Welfare of the HKSAR Government has pledged to tackle the problem by attracting more jobseekers to the sector by subsidizing training courses as well as increasing the number of intake for health and social care related students in tertiary institutes, the yearly approximation of 1,200 strong new recruit has failed to battle the soaring demand of the ageing industry.

APIAS sees the inadequate workforce in Hong Kong as a result from a basket of interrelated reasons including job mobility, unsatisfactory salary scales, insufficient practicum experiences, lack of progression pathways, and a lack of mandatory training or registration for field entry. Many perceive health professions in elder care with negative connotations, and holds negative perceptions towards elder care job duties.

## Qualifications Framework, a win-win-win for employers, employees and stakeholders

Qualifications framework is an articulation pathway for academic, vocational and continuing education which recognizes all levels of competence through qualifications and skills training. It provides a holistic training model where learners acquire the necessary knowledge and skills as they progress through competence levels for pursuing long term careers.

At present, 17 industries have adopted the qualifications framework for career progression and competence articulation covering over 40 percent of all employees in Hong Kong. The health and social care industry is yet to follow.

"Through the development of a quality assured competence framework for recognizing and benchmarking the skills, knowledge and experiences of a health and social care worker, we hope to create a clear career path with formal recognition by the government for those who wish to enter into the industry," Ho explained.

The qualifications framework is seen by APIAS as a comprehensive solution to systematically bridge employees' expectations and market demands.

Stakeholders will also be able to benefit from the enhancement of field workers' capabilities as such skills articulation can bolster continuing education which in turn guarantees a sustainable improvement of service quality in the long term.

## APIAS leads the way to qualify gerontological services

Prof. Alfred Chan Cheung-ming, the Director of APIAS, has been appointed as sector specialist in the Hong Kong

Council for Accreditation of Academic & Vocational Qualification since 2006 and has always devoted in the advocacy of qualifying gerontological services. He observed the potential of introducing the qualifications framework into the Hong Kong health and social care context.

He will also be commencing in November 2011 as the Chairman of Elder Care Industry Training Advisory Committee for the implementation and development of the Qualifications Framework and Specification of Competence Standards.

Without doubt, tertiary institutions will be a key component in the gatekeeping and accreditation of qualifications by providing high quality training programmes. Education providers will become the hub for linking communities' service providers and authorities.



APIAS treasures such opportunity to utilize our expertise in gerontological research and our partnerships with communities to help contrive an appropriate benchmarking system for the qualifications framework, as well as designing curricula to meet respective qualification levels. Courses and training programmes will also be provided in due course.

International experiences are taken into reference in the construction of the Framework from countries advanced in elder care and personnel training such as the UK, Australia and Canada, whilst taking account of the domestic characteristics in Hong Kong.

We believe the active involvement in the health and social care sector can help the promotion of ageing studies and call for a more supportive society towards the graying phenomena.





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