Employment and TVET: Singapore’s approach

Thomas Yeo
Principal TVET and HRD Consultant
CET Global Pte Ltd
Thomas Yeo - brief profile

- Principal TVET and HRD Consultant with CET Global Pte Ltd.
- Head of policy for WDA’s Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) system from 2011 to May 2014.
- Represented Singapore at the ASEAN Qualifications Referencing Framework (AQRF) Taskforce between 2012 and May 2014.
- Led an audit team to conduct WSQ accreditation of training organisations, courses, and adult educators operating for the Retail, Healthcare Support, Security, Environmental Cleaning, Landscape and Floristry industries in Singapore.
- Master Trainer on development of competency standards, competency frameworks/maps, competency based assessment plans and tools.
- TVET Consultant, Singapore Polytechnic International, on NQF development and AQRF referencing.
Scope of presentation

• About Singapore
• Key milestones of Singapore’s continuing and education training landscape
• Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) System
• Key components of WSQ Framework
• Employment and WSQ System
About Singapore

- Celebrating 50 years of independence
- Island size: 718.3 sq km
- Population: 5.47 million as of June 2014
- Economy: Dependant on global trade (est. 3 times of GDP)
- Education profile: 96.7% literacy; 69.5% secondary or higher qualifications (among residents aged 25 years & over)
- Natural resources: People (TFR 1.25)
Key milestones of Singapore’s continuing and education training landscape

1960-70s Preparation for foreign investment and industrialisation

1960
Adult Education Board formed

1964
First Vocational Training Institute set up

1973
Industrial Training Board formed

1979
Skills Development Fund launched

1979-80
Vocational and Industrial Training Board formed

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Table 1: Annual GDP at Current Market Prices, 2010

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Source: Singapore Department of Statistics, 2010

Key milestones of Singapore’s continuing and education training landscape

1980-90s

1982-83
Economic and Development Board set up industrial training institutes

1983-87
Adult workers training programmes introduced: BEST, MOST, WISE

1992
Institute of Technical Education formed

1996
Skills Development Fund launched

1999
Manpower 21 Programme launched

Scaling up industry, labour skills upgrading and improving productivity

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Key milestones of Singapore’s continuing and education training landscape

1. **2003**
   - Workforce Development Agency formed

2. **2005**
   - Workforce Skills Qualifications frameworks launched

3. **2008**
   - 1st CET Masterplan launched

4. **2010**
   - National Productivity & Continuing Education Council formed

5. **2014**
   - 2nd CET Masterplan – CET2020 launched

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Singapore’s education and training landscape

Focus of qualifications / programmes

Academic

- Degrees (universities)
- Diplomas (polytechnics)
- Technical education certificates (ITE)

Skills

Formal school education

Continuing education and training

TVET / CET

- Private diplomas and foreign degrees (private education providers)
- CET Diplomas (polytechnics)
- Professional certificates (professional bodies)
- Workforce Skills Qualifications (CET Centres & ATOs)
- Industry skills certificates (ITE)
- In-company training

Nature of qualifications / programmes

Ministry of Education

Workforce Development Agency

Private sector
Workforce Skills Qualifications System (WSQ) - Facts

- WSQ system launched in 2005.
- A national credentialing system, under the Singapore Workforce Development Agency.
- WSQ courses delivered by approved training organisations to:
  - Professionalise the industry-specific capabilities.
  - Improve labour mobility for workers and companies.
  - Ensure skills qualifications and certifications are based on industry-agreed standards.
  - Create accessibility and opportunities for skills upgrading and lifelong learning.

Source: www.wda.gov.sg
WSQ trains individuals in three types of competencies

- Foundational Competencies
  - E.g. Employability skills, workplace literacy and numeracy skills

- Industry Competencies
  - E.g. In retail industry, customer service skills

- Occupational Competencies
  - E.g. In retail industry, store merchandising display skills

33 industry frameworks

Single module or full qualification
Assessment and certification

Source: www.wda.gov.sg
Linkages between WSQ and academic system

**Mutual Recognition Arrangement between Institute of Technical Education (ITE) and WSQ**

- WSQ Qualifications
- ITE Certifications

**Articulation into institutions of higher learning**

- Admission into polytechnic part-time diplomas or institute of higher learning programmes
- Credit exemptions at education institutions

**WSQ-aligned Industrial Attachment (IA) for polytechnics students.**

- Workplace
- Polytechnics
Key components of a WSQ framework

- Competency Map
- Competency Standards
- Qualifications
- Curriculum, Training and Assessment Guide

Source: www.wda.gov.sg
Competency Standard Example

**Competency Unit Code**
TR-TEV-303C-1

**Competency Unit Title**
Conduct Competency-Based Assessment

### Summary of Competency Elements
This competency unit consists of the following elements:
1. Prepare for conduct of assessment
2. Prepare candidate for assessment
3. Carry out conduct of assessment

These elements are described in detail in the following pages.

### Description of Competency Element

#### Competency Element Title
1. Prepare For Conduct of Assessment

#### Underpinning Knowledge
A competent individual needs to know and understand:
- how to prepare for conduct of assessment

#### Performance Criteria
A competent individual must be able to successfully perform the following:
1.1 Confirm details of assessment plan with relevant stakeholders
1.2 Ensure resources stipulated in the assessment plan are available, safe and in proper working conditions
1.3 Ensure the set up of assessment site is in accordance with assessment plan and workplace safety and health guidelines
1.4 Ensure the assessment tools required for assessment are available for use

#### Assumed Skills and Knowledge
The assumed skills and knowledge for this unit are as follows. Learners are assumed to:
- be competent in the interpretation of the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ) framework
- able to listen and speak English at a proficiency level equivalent to the Employability Skills System (ESS) level 8;
- be able to read and write English at a proficiency level equivalent to ESS level 8; and
- be able to manipulate numbers at a proficiency level equivalent to ESS level 7

### Range and Context
Performance is demonstrated by:
Confirming the following details of assessment plan with relevant stakeholders:
- evidence requirements
- resources required for assessment
- set up requirement
- organisational requirements, which may include standard operating procedures, processes and systems, policies
- industry requirements, which may include Industry Standards, Codes of Practice and Regulations
- legal requirements, which may include Copyright Act, Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act, Workplace Safety & Health Act

Confirming details of assessment plan with relevant stakeholders, who may include:
- line manager
- supervisor
- assessment manager
- subject matter expert/specialist

Source: www.wda.gov.sg
WSQ Qualifications

• To meet targeted occupational, business and industry’s needs as well as needs of the candidates.

• Consistent with the level descriptors of the WSQ qualifications level and its nomenclature.

• Sufficiently differentiated from one another.

• Clear progression pathways within WSQ and/or articulation to academic system.

• Open access system, i.e. no pre-requisites for training enrolment.
Qualifications Example

- **CERTIFICATE IN RETAIL OPERATIONS**
  - 3 Core + 5 Electives (108hrs / 11CV - 196hrs / 17CV)
  - with max 1 Elective from Generic Skills
  1. Maintain professional image (12hrs / 1CV)
  2. Interact with customers (24hrs / 2CV)
  3. Sell products and services (32hrs / 3CV)

- **ADVANCED CERTIFICATE IN RETAIL SUPERVISION**
  - 5 Core + 4 Electives (206hrs / 20CV - 272hrs / 26CV)
  - with max 1 Elective from Generic Skills
  1. Provide marketing and promotion support (24hrs / 2CV)
  2. Monitor visual merchandising presentation (24hrs / 2CV)
  3. Control and maintain stock (32hrs / 3CV)
  4. Supervise retail operations (32hrs / 3CV)
  5. Supervise retail staff (40hrs / 4CV)

- **DIPLOMA IN RETAIL MANAGEMENT**
  - 7 Core + 2 Electives (304hrs / 30CV - 344hrs / 34CV)
  - with max 1 Elective from Generic Skills
  1. Retailing and the economy (24hrs / 2CV)
  2. Manage marketing strategies (32hrs / 3CV)
  3. Manage merchandising and store presentation (40hrs / 4CV)
  4. Manage finance for retail operations (48hrs / 5CV)
  5. Lead and manage work teams (40hrs / 4CV)
  6. Manage service operations (40hrs / 4CV)
  7. Manage human resources to achieve service excellence (40hrs / 4CV)

Source: www.wda.gov.sg
Curriculum, Training and Assessment Guide Example

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Source: www.wda.gov.sg
Applications of WSQ framework

• Benchmark industry best practices.
• Guide development of job descriptions.
• Improve performance management systems and training programmes.
• Establish employees' career paths.
• Guide training needs analysis.
• Conduct in-company training, contextualised to meet its needs.
• Facilitate recruitment of competent staff equipped with required occupational and industry capabilities.
Employment and WSQ System

Stakeholders engagement throughout all components!

1. Industry Councils
2. Outcome-based funding
3. Career and Employment Services
   CET Centres and Training Providers
   Adult Educators
   Qualifications
   Competency Standards
Industry Skills Councils (ISCs)

• Made up of selected stakeholders from the industry, on an invitation basis to form a council to look into industry manpower or TVET initiatives.
• Formation initiated and facilitated by WDA.
• Primarily provides leadership and strategic advice on manpower or TVET matters, with the agenda facilitated by WDA.
• ISC responsibilities
Outcomes based funding

• Course fee funding
  • Continuing Education and Training (CET) Centres appointed by WDA and pre-funded at **up to 90%** of full course fees

• Absentee payroll funding
  • A grant to help employers defray the manpower costs incurred when they send their employees for certifiable skills training during working hours.
  • **Up to 95%** of hourly basic salary

• Key characteristics of funding:
  • Age
  • Course type
  • Education level
  • Employment status
  • Income level
Career and Employment Services

• Job interest profiling
• Job bank database
• Career Centres services

• Various schemes and programmes to incentivise employers to:
  • Recruitment, training and retention (e.g. Enterprise Training Support)
  • Place and train new recruits (e.g. P-Max for Individuals / Employers)
  • Job placement programme (e.g. Place and Train (PnP) Programmes, Train and Place (TnP) Programmes)
  • Recruit and train mature and back-to-work locals workers (e.g. WorkPro)
Bringing CET and Employment Earlier to Individuals

SkillsFuture initiatives: Career guidance, internship and attachment, modularised training, training credits and awards that cover school, work and career

Source: www.skillsfuture.sg
The way ahead...SkillsFuture

...provide Singaporeans with the opportunities to develop their fullest potential throughout life, regardless of their starting points...to help attain mastery of skills.

Source: http://www.skillsfuture.sg/

Help individuals make well-informed choices in education, training and careers

Develop an integrated high-quality system of education and training that responds to constantly evolving needs

Promote employer recognition and career development based on skills and mastery

Foster a culture that supports and celebrates lifelong learning
Thank you!