

THE PHILIPPINE CENTER FOR ACADEMIC INFORMATION AND MOBILITY

UNESCO Regional Convention

The *Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education* of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) aims to contribute, through joint action, to the promotion of the active cooperation of all the nations of the Asia and the Pacific region in the cause of peace and international understanding and to the development of more effective collaboration with other Member States of UNESCO with regard to a more comprehensive use of their educational, technological and scientific potential.

Through the Convention, the contracting states agree to take all feasible steps at the national, bilateral and multilateral levels, in particular by means of bilateral, subregional, regional or other agreements, arrangements between universities or other higher educational institutions and arrangements with the competent national or international organizations and other bodies, with a view to the progressive attainment of the goals defined in the Convention.

To have a qualification recognized, through the UNESCO recognition convention, students must consult the Convention ratified by both the country where they have done their studies and the country where they would like to continue their studies and contact the **National Information Center** in the country where they would like to study.

National Information Centers

NICs assist in promoting the mobility of students, teachers, and researchers by providing authoritative advice and information concerning the academic recognition of qualifications undertaken in other countries. The main stakeholders of this service will be HEIs, students and their advisers, parents, teachers, and prospective employers.

The *Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education* (2011) requires Parties to have an NIC. This does not necessarily require a new structure or organization to be formed. Parties need to provide a single point of contact from within existing ministries and organizations or a new entity.

The goals of NICs are to:

- Provide information that will assist in recognizing qualifications in higher education;
- Provide information to assist the facilitation of the recognition of qualifications; and,
- Promote the use of the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education and/or any comparable document produced by the Parties' respective HEIs, subject to their respective national laws and regulations.

To develop policy and practice for the recognition of qualifications, the Council of Europe and UNESCO have established the ENIC Network (European Network of National Information Centres on academic recognition and mobility). The Network is made up of the NICs of the States party to the UNESCO Europe Region and other established non-European countries. Australia, USA, Japan and other countries from the Asia Pacific region also has established NICs.

The Asia Pacific Academic Recognition Network (APARNET), on the other hand, was established to facilitate discussion and the exchange of information among the NICs in Asia and the Pacific. The APARNET aims to achieve the objectives of the Regional Convention to assist in the collection, dissemination and exchange of information relating to the recognition of academic qualifications and higher education systems within the Asia Pacific region.

PHLCenter for Academic Information and Mobility

The Commission on Higher Education Rationalization Plan 2013 (RatPlan) states that the International Affairs Staff (IAS) “serves as the clearinghouse for all bilateral and multilateral academic agreements, services, exchanges, international recognition of degrees and qualifications and policy coordination on the inflow and outflow of international students and services.” Moreover, IAS is mandated to serve as clearinghouse of information on education policy, systems, curriculum development, educational governance and education materials as well as information on the comparability of higher education programs, degrees, diplomas in other countries, on the one hand, and as source of similar information on the Philippines (in cooperation with OPRKM-KMD, OSDS-ISD and CHEDROs).

Pursuant to CHED Special Order (CSO) 47 s2013, the IAS, through its director, serves as the Chairperson of the Technical Working Group for the establishment/institutionalization of the National Information Center (NIC) under the recognition of qualifications in higher education.

During the 430th Commission en Banc Meeting held on the 26 May 2014, the Commission approved the IAS-proposed template for the Philippine Center for Academic Information and Mobility (CAIM) and its process flow, through **Resolution No. 293-2014**.