

Qualifications Framework in Kiribati

Qualifications in Kiribati are derived from 3 major providers. The first is the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (MEYS). The second is the Ministry of Employment and Labour, and third is the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

The MEYS provides Certificate qualifications to 3 levels. The lowest of these is the Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC). This is the minimum Basic Education qualification in the compulsory Kiribati Education System. This is obtained at the end of year 9 to around 16,000 students in 2006. The second and highest in the local Kiribati Education System is the Kiribati National Certificate (KNC). This is a qualification around 6,000 students achieve at the end of Year 11 in 2006. It is the School Leaving Certificate. The third and highest qualification around 1,700 students achieve at the end of year 12 in 2006 is the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment's (SPBEA) Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate(PSSC). This is a qualification students achieve at the end of the formal education system in Kiribati. Along with this, there is also the USP Foundation Programme currently offered by some schools and the USP Extension Center in Kiribati.

At post-secondary level 5 different providers provide qualifications that range from Certificates to Diplomas. The providers include:

- a) The Ministry of Employment and Labour: offers i) technical and vocational qualifications in areas related to – mechanical engineering, mechanics, construction, carpentry, plumbing, office skills, computer software, and the like. The course, which ranges from short (a week) to 3 years (construction) are conducted at the Kiribati Technical Institute.
- b) The Ministry of Health provides Certificate Qualifications related to careers in Nursing. These courses run over 3 years.
- c) The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports provides Certificate and Diploma qualifications to Primary and Junior Secondary pre-service teachers. These courses run between 1 to 4 years at the Kiribati Teachers College
- d) The Ministry of Employment and Labour provides seafaring related qualifications to Seamen, and Japanese geared trained I-Kiribati fishermen. The former is an old German owned Company that has international repute and has certified over several of thousands of I-Kiribati seamen
- e) The KIRIBATI PROTESTANT CHURCH PROVIDES A CERTIFICATE, DIPLOMA AND A DEGREE QUALIFICATION IN THEOLOGY.

Having presented the above, it is revealed that there is a great need to ensure i) qualifications are understood and correctly interpreted, ii) there is a high incidence of mobility between present and future generations. Hence there is a need to put in place a system that can provide qualifications information for Kiribati and also for non-Kiribati authorities to allow them to interpret qualifications from Kiribati and from nearby Pacific Island Countries, especially Fiji, Australia and New Zealand. An example of this is at the Public Service Office. Having a Diploma entitles one to certain jobs, generally above Certificate holders. The States sometimes issues high school student graduates Diplomas. Likewise, as long as a person possesses a Masters degree, the person is entitled to a high level post – regardless of the specialization. Students who study in New Zealand or Australia and who want to apply for pre-service scholarships are asked to repeat the Year 12 PSSC course – just so that their results can be compared to others in the cohort.