



Philippine Qualifications Framework: Bridging Learning, Skills, and Jobs into a Seamless National Ecosystem

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Presentation Overview

- **Why PQF Matters**
 - role in human capital, jobs, and development
- **How PQF Works**
 - framework design, governance, coordination mechanisms
- **What the Data Show**
 - labor market reality: employment outcomes, skills mismatch, “missing middle”
- **What Must Be Done**
 - key takeaways & strategic actions



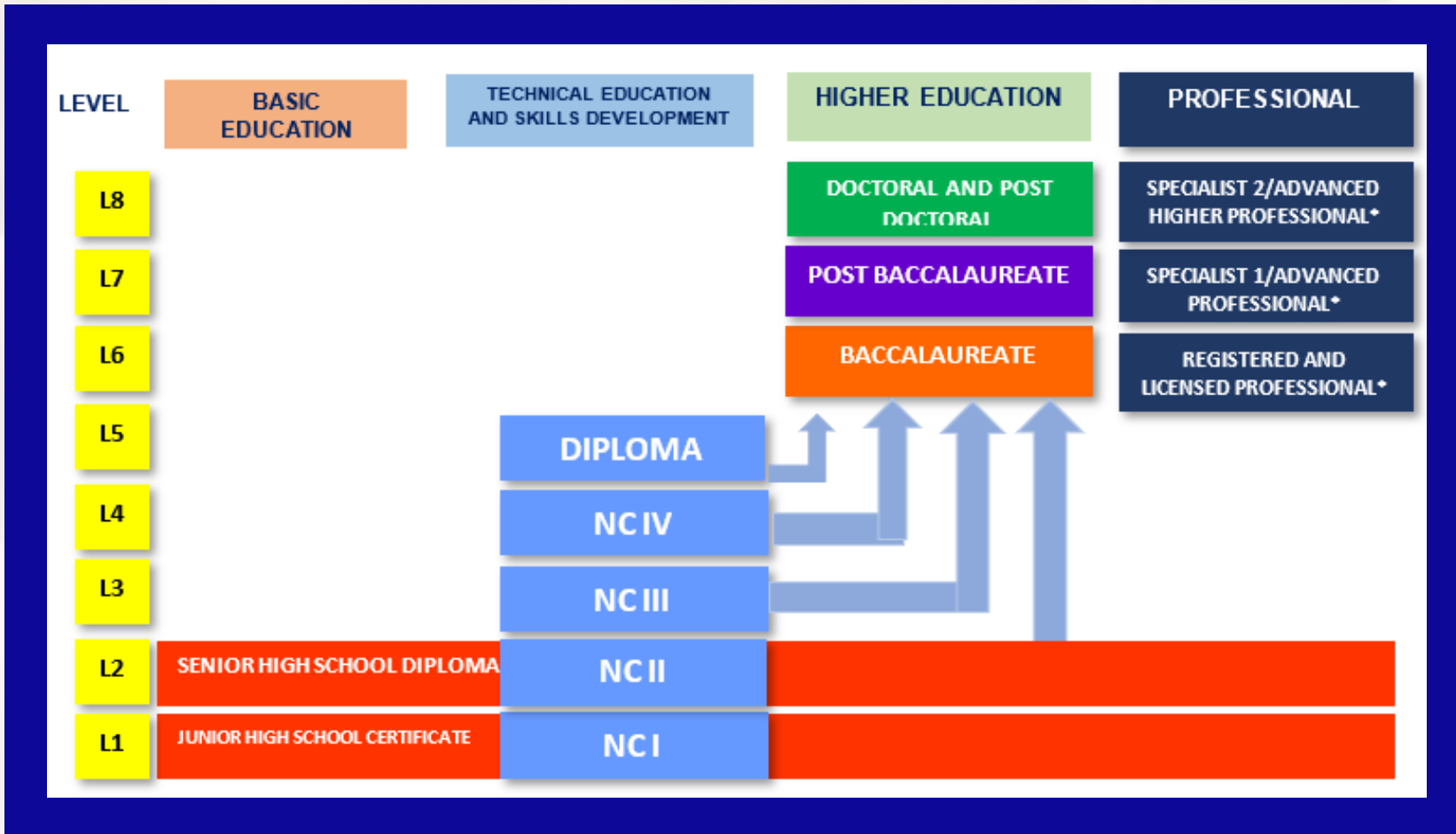
Why PQF Exists

beyond education reform, productivity & competitiveness

- **PQF (2019 RA 10968)** : Reference system of national standards for qualifications
- National policy to ensure **quality-assured qualifications** that are **comparable and recognized both locally and globally**
- a **common language**—for learners, workers, educators, and employers—to bridge what we teach in our classrooms with what the labor market truly demands.
- links qualifications, skills, and occupations
- Without this integration, we end up with a **fragmented system** that fuels skills mismatches.



What the PQF is: PQF Diagram



- 8 levels, differentiated by descriptors in the domains of knowledge, skills & values, application, & degree of independence
- Sub-frameworks, education/training subsystems: basic education, TVET, higher education, professional development
- Facilitate equivalencies, articulation, lifelong learning, alignment with international frameworks

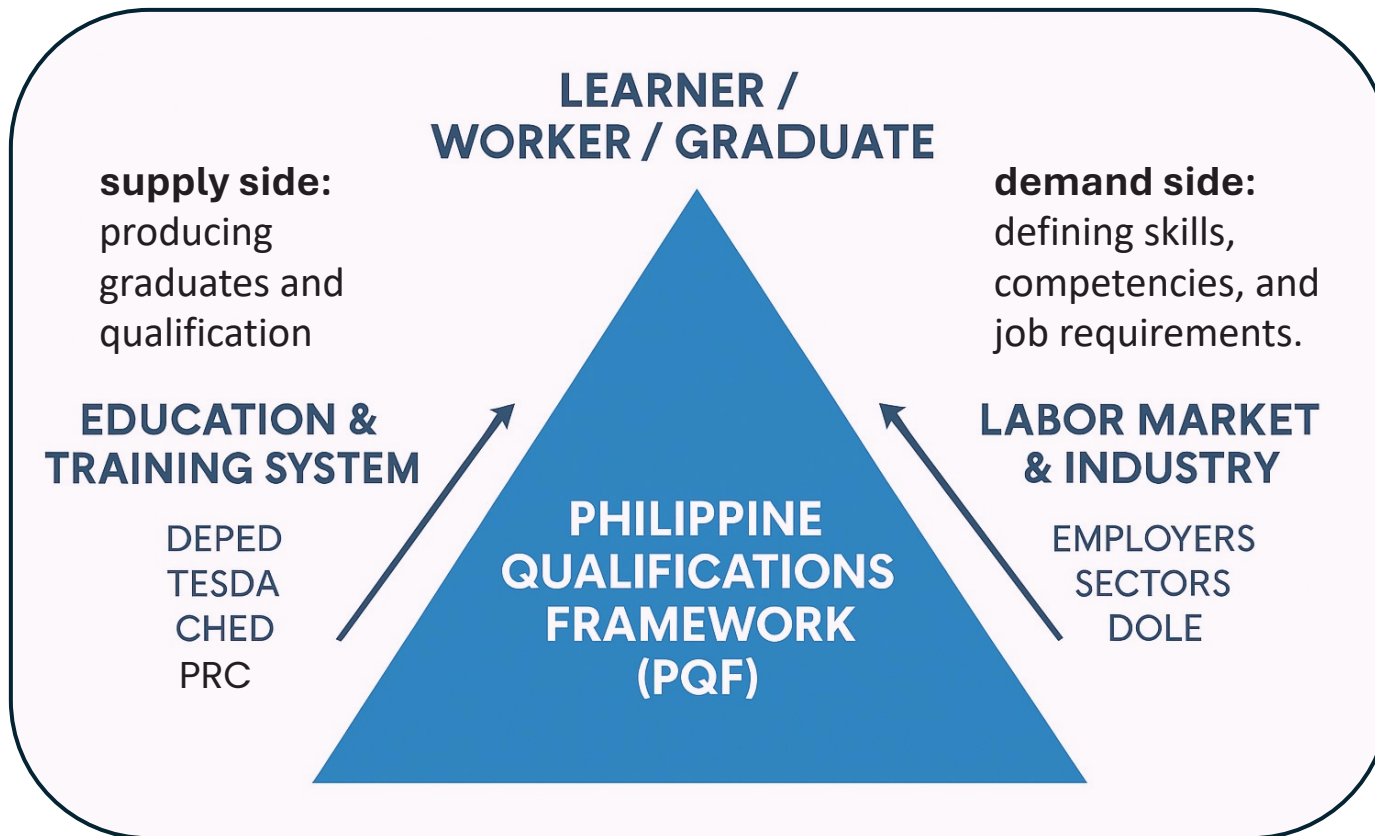
PQF Diagram: possible progression of qualification through levels, along with the pathways among the tracks that enable this progression.

The higher the level, the more analysis, independent judgment, and leadership are expected

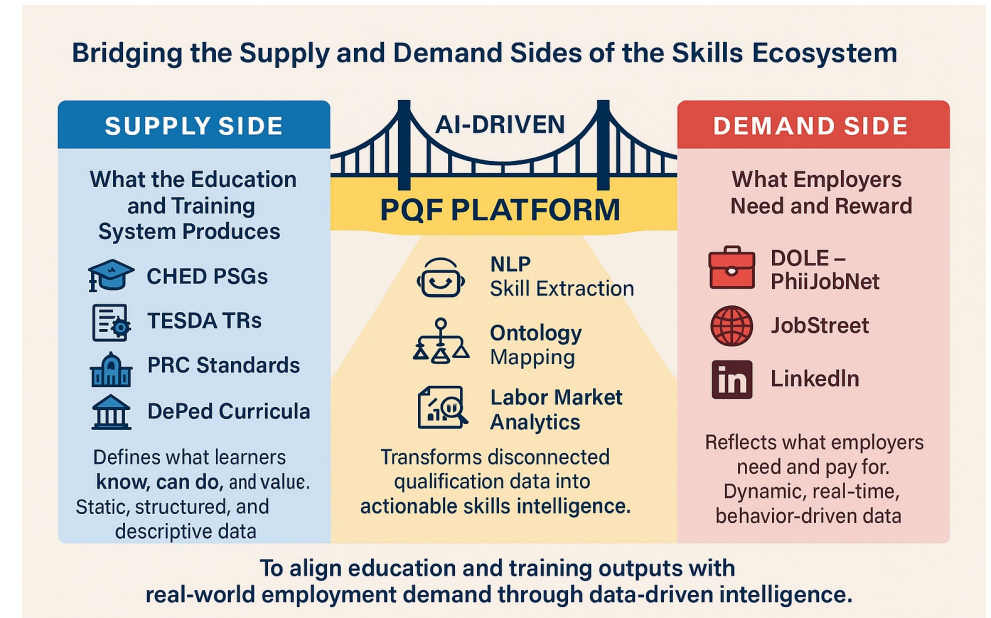
PQF Level	Type of Knowledge required	Skills & Values	Application, complexity	Degree of Independence
Level 1	Basic/general knowledge; familiar with simple facts, procedures	Follows instructions; uses basic tools; displays work discipline	Simple, routine, predictable tasks	Always supervised; no independent judgment
Level 2	Basic operational knowledge related to work activities	Performs limited tasks; uses tools/equipment correctly; follows safety rules	Familiar/routine contexts; repetitive tasks	Works with limited autonomy; requires guidance
Level 3	Broad knowledge of work processes; some theory behind practice	Skilled use of tools/equipment; solves routine problems; follows quality standards	Applied in varied but familiar situations	Works independently in routine tasks; may assist others
Level 4	Technical knowledge with some principles; understands procedures and systems	Supervises routine tasks; solves procedural issues; ensures compliance	Applied in predictable and some non-routine situations	Works independently with some responsibility for others
Level 5	Specialized knowledge in a field; understanding of concepts and methods	Selects appropriate methods; coordinates tasks; ensures safety/quality; ethical conduct	Supports operations in varied and unfamiliar contexts	Works independently with supervisory/coordination responsibility
Level 6	Theoretical and applied knowledge in a profession; broad and coherent	Professional judgment; innovation within own field; manages processes and people	Applied in complex and unpredictable contexts	Fully responsible for outcomes of own and team's work
Level 7	Advanced knowledge; integrates theory and practice; specialized expertise	Designs/innovates solutions; leads teams; manages strategic functions	High-complexity contexts; organizational or system-level impact	Works with significant autonomy; accountable for major decisions
Level 8	Frontier or highly specialized knowledge; thought leadership	Creates new knowledge/e practice; leads policy, research, or institutional change	National/sectoral/global contexts	Full independence; authority and accountability at the highest level

linking occupations to PQF levels	PQF Level	Typical Qualification	Example Occupations	Common Sectors
Skills-& craft-based	Level 1	Certificate of Completion, Basic Education Equivalent, Community-based Training	Utility Worker, Farm Laborer, Household, Hotel Attendant, Messenger	Agriculture, Services
	Level 2	TESDA NC I TVET Certificate	Sales Clerk, Bagger/Cashier, Machine Operator (entry), Construction Helper	Retail, Manufacturing, Construction
	Level 3	TESDA NC II / III	Electrician, Welder, Cook, Caregiver , Automotive Service Tech	Skilled Trades, Hotels, Restaurants, Healthcare, Auto
Advanced technicians & associate professionals	Level 4	TESDA NC IV / Diploma / Advanced Tech Certificate	Senior Technician, Foreman, Safety Officer, ICT Support Tech, Nursing Aide	Construction, ICT Support, Manufacturing, Utilities
	Level 5	TVET Diploma / Higher Diploma / Associate Degree	Paralegal, HR Specialist, Accounting Associate, ECE Assistant Teacher	Business Services, Allied Professions, Education Support
Professionals & senior specialists	Level 6	Bachelor's Degree	Registered Nurse , Teacher, Software Developer, Engineer, Accountant	Healthcare, Education, ICT, Engineering, Finance
	Level 7	Master's Degree, Postgraduate Diploma, Specialist Professional License	Medical Specialist, Senior Engineer, School Principal, Program Manager, Nurse Specialist	Hospitals, Industry Leadership, Academia (mid-to-senior), Corporate Strategy
Sector experts & system leaders	Level 8	Doctorate, High-Level Professional Fellowship, National Expert Recognition	Chief Economist, Industry Thought Leader, University Professor, Director-General / C-suite, Chief Nurse, Nursing Director, Policy Leader	National Policy, R&D Leadership, Advanced Academia, Sectoral Governance

PQF evolving into a strategic platform that integrates education, labor, and industry systems



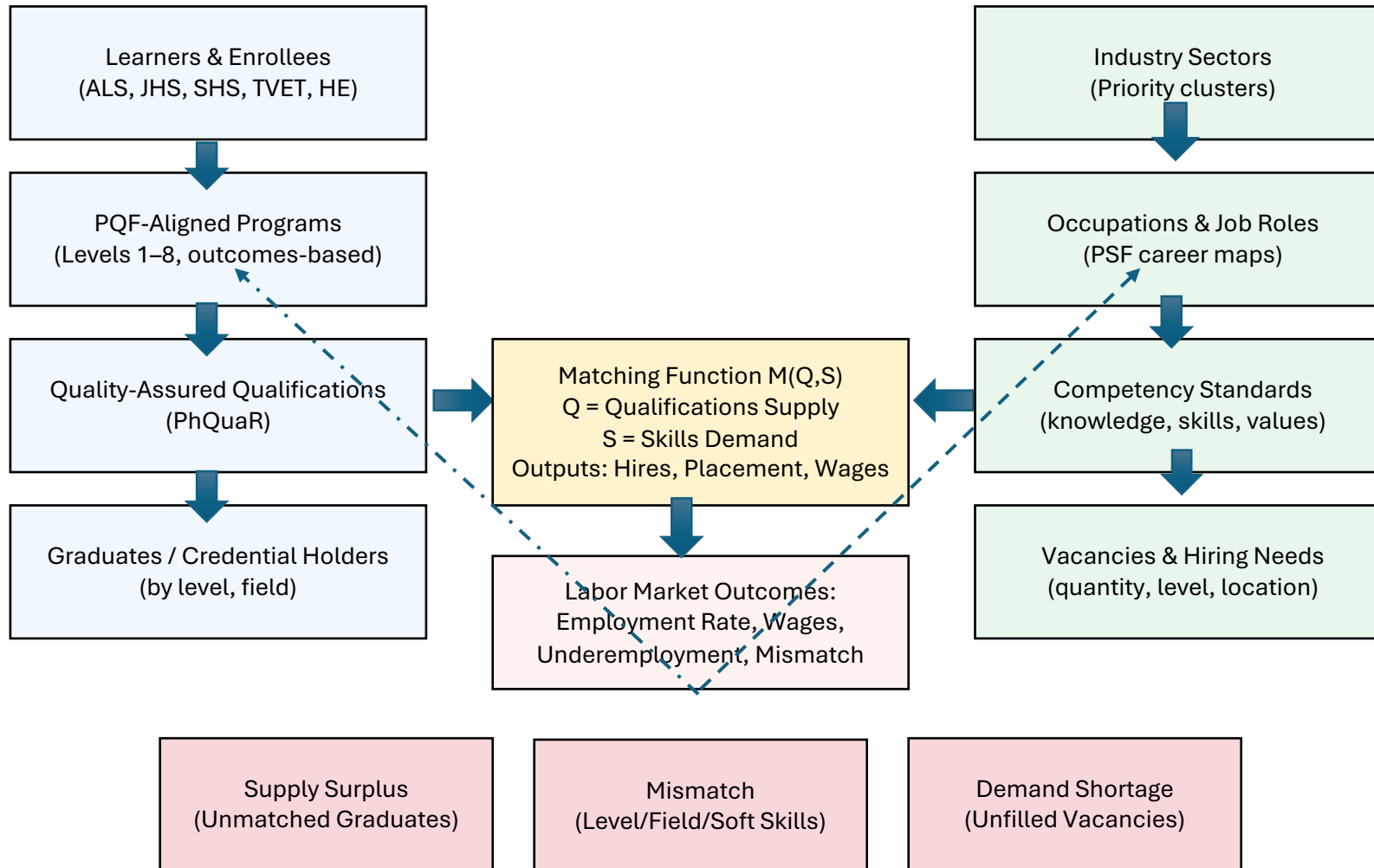
Defines levels, descriptors, and standards so qualifications are **understandable, portable, and aligned with workforce needs**



- **bridges learning and work**, ensuring that education leads to real skills and careers.
- more than an education policy, a **strategic tool for human capital development supporting industrial upgrading, inclusive growth, and national competitiveness**

Supply and Demand in the Labor Market

where skills meet jobs



PQF sets the **learning outcome levels (1–8)**

PSF links those levels to **actual occupations and skills** in industry

- each qualification level corresponds to **defined job roles and skill expectations**.
- aligning the PSF competency standards with PQF level descriptors – to enhance skills recognition and workforce development

Supply-side only: graduates without guaranteed jobs

Demand-side alone: industries without qualified workers

Governance Structure

Policy Authority: PQF National Coordinating Council (PQF-NCC)
DepED (Chair), Members: DOLE, CHED, TESDA, PRC,
2 private sector representatives
Align & promote a seamless education & training system

PQF Permanent Secretariat:
provides the necessary
technical and administrative
support to the PQF-NCC in
the performance of its
powers and functions

PQF Implementation 7 Working Groups

Qualifications Register (TESDA) | Quality Assurance (CHED, TESDA) | Pathways and Equivalencies (CHED) | Information and Guidelines (DepEd) | International Alignment (PRC) | Government-Industry-Education Sector (DOLE) | Lifelong Learning (DepEd, TESDA)

PQF 2025 Work Plan

Key Implementation Strategies



WB 2021 PQF Assessment: Gaps and Weaknesses



Absence of an integrated, dynamic, and skills-intelligent system: undermined the transformative intent of PQF and its supporting frameworks

- **Limited demand-side perspective**, insufficient evidence of labor-market uptake or utilization of PQF-aligned qualifications
- **Limited use of labor market information:** DOLE produces JobsFit reports and PhilJobNet data, these were not yet systematically used to inform updating of TESDA TRs and CHED PSGs
- **Persistent skills-mismatches** in the Philippine labor market: graduates don't fit industry requirements

“while 39% of employed Filipinos are overqualified for their jobs, 29% lack the necessary qualifications”
PIDS, Connie and Lawrence Dacuycuy (2021)

Qualifications, Skills, & jobs: Labor Market Evidence

Youth are Employed* – but Increasingly Underemployed

- Fewer young people are entering the labor force: 656K to 574K
- Youth underemployment is rising: 10.1% to 11.5%
- Participation is stagnant: 33.3% to 33.3% (flat)
- Unemployment: 12% to 11.7% (slight improvement)

* Employment rate: 88 in Aug '24 to 88.3% in Aug '25

Indicator	Aug 2024	Aug 2025
Youth Unemployment	12.0%	11.7% ↓
Youth Underemployment	10.1%	11.5% ↑
New Entrants	656K	574K ↓
LFPR	33.2%	33.3%

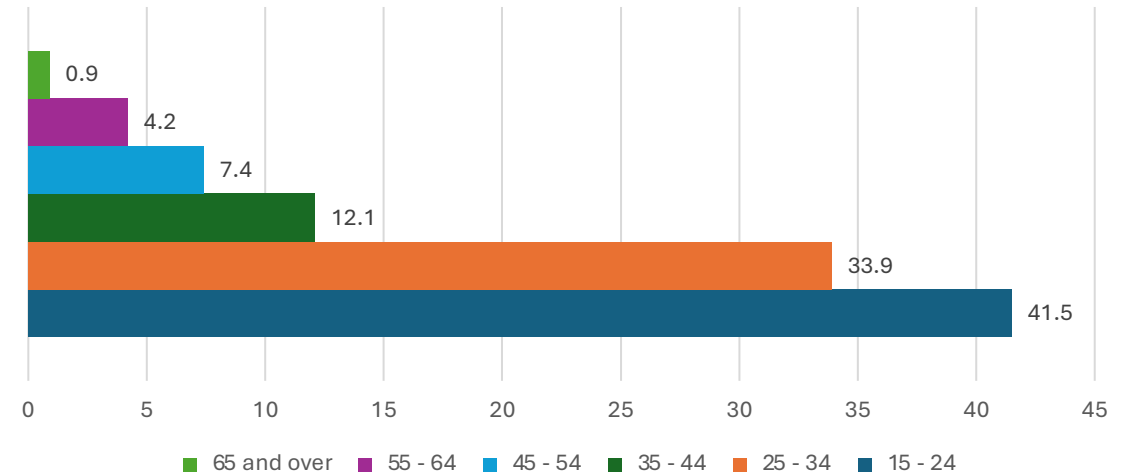
Source of basic data: Philippine Statistics Authority.

Youth are entering work – but not finding high-quality jobs
Problem is not joblessness – it is job quality and absence of strong middle-skill pathways

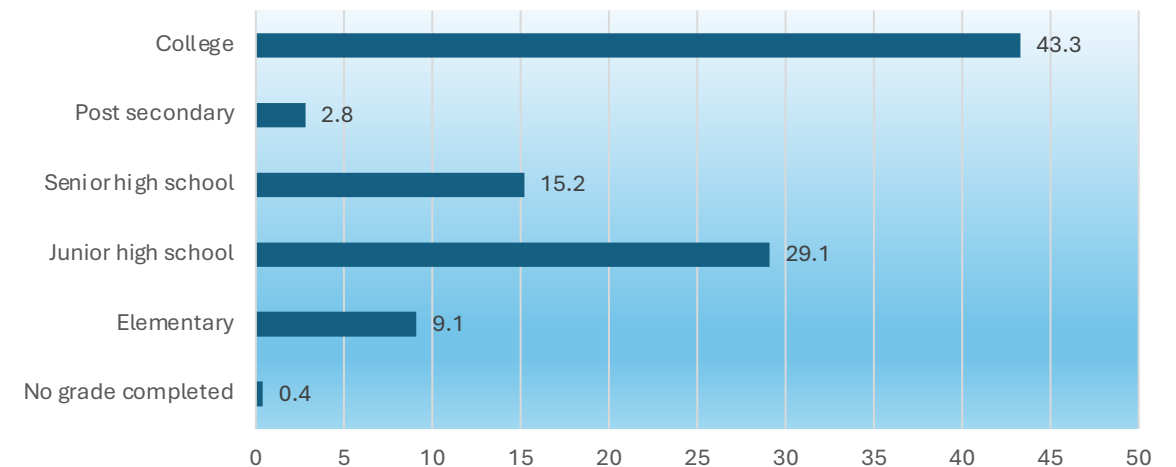
Polarized system between oversupplied degree holders and underqualified JHS leavers

- **JHS: weak labor market value, low employability**
- SHS: limited cohorts in the labor market
- Persistence of the **“college glut”** problem: many young people pursue degrees that do not align with labor market demand
- **Degree bias** hiring practices: employers over-require degrees, competition for jobs that don’t necessarily need higher education.
- **Skills mismatch**: college graduates and JHS graduates dominate unemployment
- **“Missing Middle”**: SHS–TVL + TESDA NC pathways are not yet producing at scale or not well-recognized by employers

Unemployed by Age Group, Aug 2025

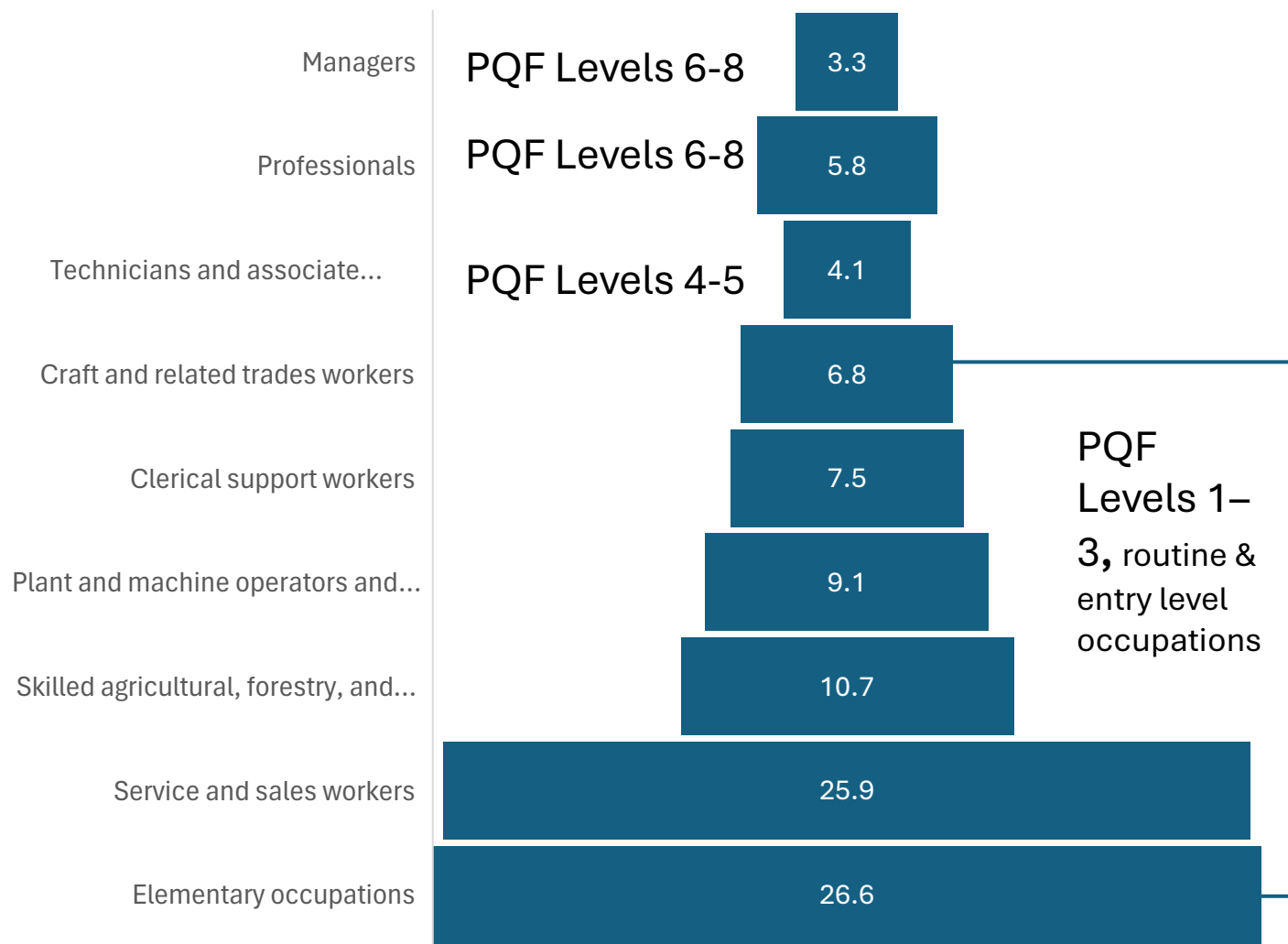


Unemployed Persons by Level of Education, Aug 2025



The Missing Middle in the Labor Market

Employed Persons by Occupation, Aug 2025



Source of basic data: Philippine Statistics Authority.

Are we stuck in a Low-Skill Equilibrium and a labor market built on Low Productivity?

labor market is still heavily skewed toward **low-skill, labor-intensive work**

- Demand remains concentrated in PQF Levels 1–3
- limited demand for **high-skill, knowledge-intensive jobs -- structural mismatch**
- Still a low-skill labor market → low demand for high-skill jobs → weak incentives for upgrading → persistent mismatch & underemployment
- This structural imbalance feeds the skills mismatch and limits productivity upgrading

High Vacancies, Low Skills Demand

The **PESO Employment Information System (PEIS)** is a database of jobseekers, employers, vacancies, and client transactions of **Public Employment Service Offices (PESOs)** nationwide, as well as job vacancies, employer and jobseeker profiles captured by **PhilJobNet**.

Top 20 Vacancies on PEIS and PhilJobNet (Data for 26 September-02 October 2025)

1	Call Center Agent	12,614	11	Lady Guard	1,100
2	Production Worker	9,773	12	Production Assistant	1,070
3	Customer Service Assistant	5,241	13	Office Clerk	931
4	Production & Operations Specialist	2,000	14	Production Machine Operator	920
5	Production Helper	1,691	15	Laborer (Gov)	812
6	Domestic Helper	1,589	16	Customer Relations Officer	807
7	Warehouse Helper	1,583	17	Accounting Assistant	767
8	Service Crew	1,566	18	Carpenter (General)	761
9	Security Guard	1,202	19	Sales Clerk	721
10	Cashier	1,110	20	Customs Broker	700

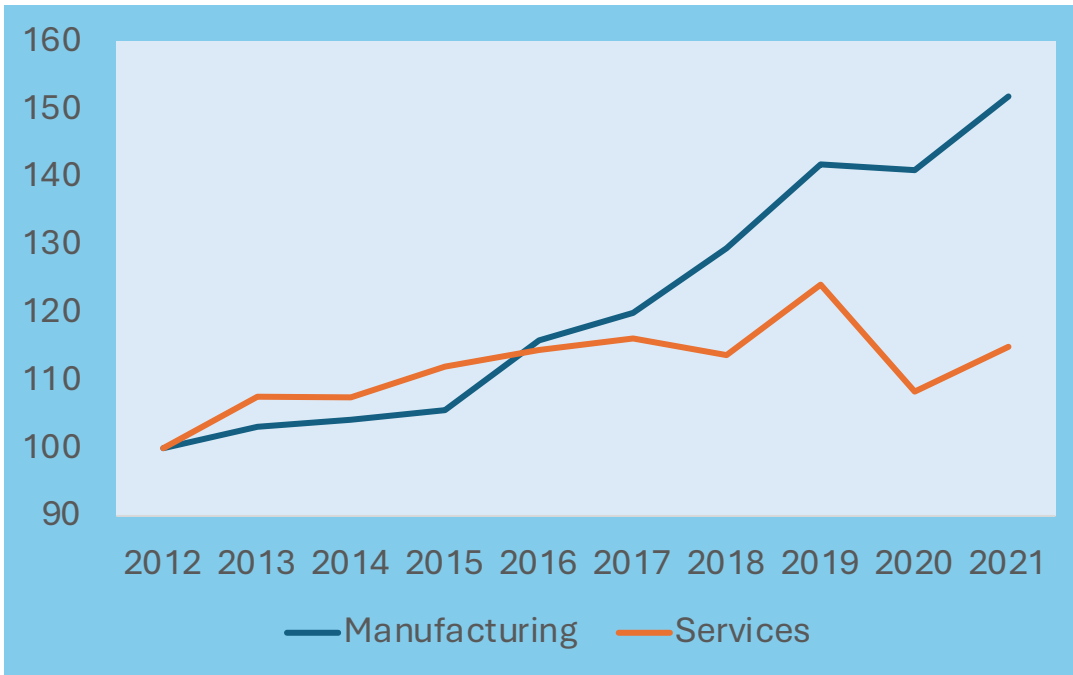
The bulk of jobs available are low-skill and routine (PQF 1–3), with very few middle-skill (PQF 3–5) or high-skill opportunities, reinforcing a low-skill labor market equilibrium.

Out of *20 vacancies*, **only 1–2** fall into the **true technician/associate professional** range (PQF 4–5). The rest are **service, clerical, basic labor, or low-skill jobs**.

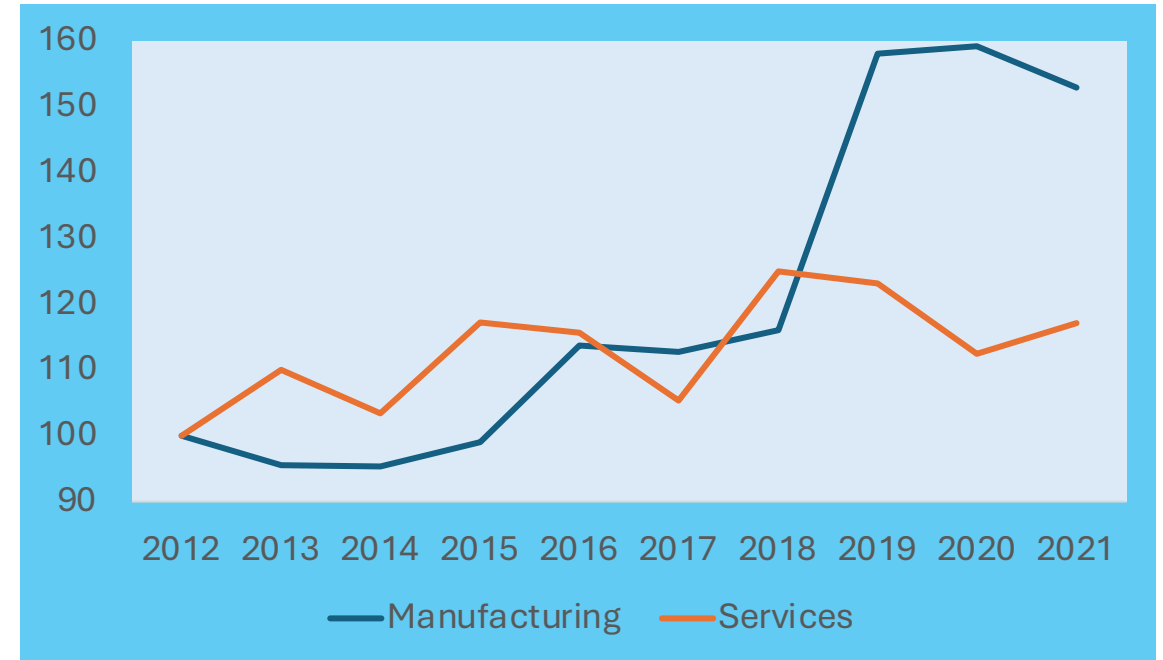
High vacancy volume \neq high skills demand.
The economy is generating *jobs*, but not *good jobs*.

Implications: the Missing Middle is a Productivity Constraint, not just an education or jobs issue

Labor productivity (value added per worker), 2012=100



Total Factor Productivity, 2012=100



- Sustained growth depends on productivity, not just job creation.
- Productivity cannot rise if firms rely mainly on low-skill labor (PQF 1–3).
- Weak development of PQF Levels 3–5 limits technology adoption & firm upgrading.
- This is why rebalancing the skills pyramid through PQF reform is an economic policy — not just education policy.



A strong PQF = a strong workforce = a strong economy

The PQF is not just a credentialing framework, qualifications — it is the bridge between education and employment, national infrastructure for human capital

- **Aligns education and training outcomes with real labor market demand and industrial policy**
- **By strengthening PQF Levels and aligning qualifications with actual occupations, we rebuild the skills pipeline from schooling → to skills → to decent work**
- A re-referenced and industry-aligned PQF turns the “missing middle” into a productive middle, enabling upward mobility, better job matching, and a more future-ready workforce.