

Correspondences between UK and Irish frameworks with European qualifications frameworks

Within Europe, two overarching qualifications frameworks exist to which the national qualifications frameworks of the UK and Ireland relate: The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA) also known as the Bologna Framework.

Table 1 shows the correspondence of levels established between national qualifications frameworks and the EQF:

European Qualifications Framework (EQF)	Qualifications and Credit Framework England/ Northern Ireland (QCF)	Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)	The National Framework of Qualifications for Ireland (NFQ IE)
8	8	8	12	10
7	7	7	11	9
6	6	6	10/9	8/7
5	5/4	5/4	8/7	6
4	3	3	6	5
3	2	2	5	4
2	1	1	4	3
1	E3	E3	3	2/1
	E2	E2	2	
	E1	E1	1	

Table 2 shows the outcome of verifying the compatibility of higher education frameworks for Scotland (FQHEIS/SCQF), for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) and for the NFQ for the Republic of Ireland (NFQ IE) with the FQ-EHEA as follows:

Typical higher education qualifications within each level	FHEQ level	FQHEIS/ SCQF level	NFQ IE level	Corresponding FQ-EHEA cycle
Doctoral degrees	8	12	10	Third cycle (end of cycle) qualifications
Master's degrees (including Integrated Master's)	7	11	9	Second cycle (end of cycle) qualifications
Postgraduate diplomas				Intermediate qualifications within the second cycle
Postgraduate certificates				
Bachelor's degrees with honours/ Honours Bachelor Degrees	6	10	8	First cycle (end of cycle) qualifications
Irish Higher Diploma				
Bachelor's degrees/ Ordinary Bachelor Degree		9	7	Intermediate qualifications within the first cycle
Graduate diplomas				
Graduate certificates				
Foundation Degrees (eg FdA, FdSc)	5	8	6	Short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle) qualifications
Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE)				
Higher National Diplomas (HND)				
Irish Higher Certificate				
Higher National Certificates (HNC)	4	7		Intermediate qualifications within the short cycle
Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE)				

For more information on compatibility with these frameworks see: http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/home_en.htm and www.enic-naric.net.

Thinking of working or studying in the UK or Ireland? You may be interested in the answer to one or more of these questions.

- What do they call the qualification which compares most closely with mine?
- Will I get some recognition for the qualifications I have?
- What kind of job or course can I apply for with my current qualification?

Recruiting people with Irish qualifications in the UK or people with UK qualifications in Ireland? You may be interested in the answer to these questions.

- How do I know what a qualification from another country means in terms of level?
- Which national qualification should I compare this qualification to?
- Where can I find more detailed information about the content and level of qualifications?

This leaflet helps you explore these questions.

Qualifications are different in different countries. However there are some clear stages people move through in education, training and work that are common to most countries. Primary education is followed by secondary education and then initial entry into employment and/or further and higher education or training.

The main table gives an indication of how you can compare qualifications across national boundaries. Examples of major qualifications at each level are provided. For more detail of the qualifications in another country, you will need to consult the website given at the head of each column. All these frameworks of qualifications change from time to time and you need to check these websites for the latest versions. Entry requirements for jobs and courses often vary within a country. This means you will need to check specific requirements with the employer or institution for the job or course that you are interested in.

Qualifications can cross boundaries

A rough guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland

How to use this leaflet:

- This leaflet provides information that allows you to look at the ways qualifications are organised in the UK and Ireland.
- It shows which qualifications in other countries are broadly comparable to your qualifications (or those that you are interested in taking).
- On the left side of the principal table you will find the main stages of education or employment - you can find where you are in these stages.
- The next column shows the qualifications framework for your country.
- To the right of this you can see the nearest levels and similar kinds of qualifications that are used in the other countries.
- This makes it possible to draw broad comparisons, rather than direct equivalences, between qualifications and their levels for each country.
- The back page indicates how UK and Irish qualifications frameworks relate to qualifications frameworks in Europe.



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Main stages of education/employment	Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales www.cqfw.net		National Framework of Qualifications for Ireland www.nfq.ie	The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework www.scqf.org.uk	Qualifications and Credit Framework/ National Qualifications Framework for England and Northern Ireland www.ofqual.gov.uk www.ccea.org.uk	Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland www.qaa.ac.uk assuringstandardsandquality/qualifications				
	LEVEL		LEVEL	LEVEL	LEVEL	LEVEL				
Professional or postgraduate education, research or employment	8	Doctoral Degrees	10	Doctoral Degree, Higher Doctorate	8	Vocational Qualifications Level 8	8	Doctoral Degrees		
	7	Master’s Degrees, Integrated Master’s Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Postgraduate Certificates	9	Master’s Degree, Post-graduate Diploma	11	SVQ Level 5, Professional Development Awards, Postgraduate Diplomas, Master’s Degrees, Integrated Master’s Degrees, Postgraduate Certificates	7	Fellowships, NVQ Level 5, Vocational Qualifications Level 7	7	Master’s Degrees, Integrated Master’s Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Postgraduate Certificates
Higher education Advanced skills training	6	Bachelor’s Degrees with Honours, Bachelor’s Degrees, Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates	8	Honours Bachelor Degree, Higher Diploma	10	Bachelor’s Degrees with Honours, Professional Development Awards, Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates	6	Vocational Qualifications Level 6	6	Bachelor’s Degrees with Honours, Bachelor’s Degrees, Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates
Entry to professional graduate employment	5	Foundation Degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diplomas (HND)	7	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	9	Bachelor’s/Ordinary Degrees, Professional Development Awards, SVQ Level 4, Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates	5	NVQ Level 4, Higher National Diplomas (HND), Vocational Qualifications Level 5	5	Foundation Degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diplomas (HND)
Specialised education and training	4	Higher National Certificates (HNC), Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE), NVQ level 4, Essential Skills Wales (ESW), Wider Key Skills (WKS), Higher Apprenticeship Framework	6	Advanced Certificate, Higher Certificate	7	Professional Development Awards, Higher National Certificates, Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE), SVQ Level 3, Scottish Baccalaureate, Advanced Highers	4	Vocational Qualifications Level 4, Higher National Certificates (HNC)	4	Higher National Certificates (HNC), Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE)
Qualified/Skilled worker Entry to higher education Completion of secondary education	3	NVQ Level 3, ESW, WKS, Vocational Qualifications Level 3, GCE AS and A Level, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Advanced, Apprenticeships Framework	5	Level 5 Certificate, Leaving Certificate	6	Highers, SVQ Level 3, Professional Development Awards, National Progression Awards, National Certificates	3	NVQ Level 3, Vocational Qualifications Level 3, GCE AS and A Level, Advanced Diplomas (England)		The table gives an indication of how you can compare qualifications across national boundaries. Examples of major qualifications at each level are provided. For more detail of the qualifications in another country, you will need to consult the website given at the head of each column. This leaflet is designed to give some information to help you begin this process, for example, by telling you what your qualification, or qualifications you are interested in studying, are broadly comparable to in other countries. Qualifications can cross boundaries - a rough guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland, July 2011
Progression to skilled employment. Continuation of secondary education.	2	NVQ Level 2, Vocational Qualifications Level 2, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Intermediate, GCSEs grade A*–C, ESW, WKS, Foundation Apprenticeship Framework	4	Level 4 Certificate, Leaving Certificate	5	Intermediate 2, Credit Standard Grade, SVQ Level 2, National Progression Awards, National Certificates	2	NVQ Level 2, Vocational Qualifications Level 2, GCSEs at grade A*–C, ESOL skills for life, Higher Diplomas (England), functional skills Level 2 (England) (English, mathematics & ICT), Essential Skills Qualifications (NI)		
Secondary education. Initial entry into employment or further education	1	NVQ Level 1, ESW, WKS, Vocational Qualifications Level 1, GCSEs at grade D–G, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Foundation	3	Level 3 Certificate, Junior Certificate	4	Intermediate 1, General Standard Grade, SVQ Level 1, National Progression Awards, National Certificates	1	NVQ Level 1, Vocational Qualifications Level 1, GCSEs at grade D–G, ESOL skills for life, Foundation Diplomas (England), functional skills Level 1 (England) (English, mathematics & ICT), Essential Skills Qualifications (NI)		
Qualifications can be taken at any age in order to continue or return to education or training	Entry Level	Entry Level Qualifications, ESW	2	Level 2 Certificate	3	Access 3, Foundation Standard Grades, National Progression Awards, National Certificates	Entry Level	Entry Level Certificates (sub levels 1–3), ESOL skills for life, functional skills Entry Level (England) (English, mathematics & ICT), Essential Skills Qualifications (NI)		
			1	Level 1 Certificate	2	Access 2, National Progression Awards, National Certificates				
					1	Access 1				

