

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 Postgraduate certificates				Intermediate qualifications within the second cycle	
Bachelor's degrees with honours/Honours Bachelor Degrees Irish Higher Diploma	6	10	8	First cycle (end of cycle) qualifications	
Bachelor's degrees/ Ordinary Bachelor Degree				7	Intermediate qualifications within the first cycle
Graduate diplomas Graduate certificates				9	
Foundation Degrees (eg FdA, FdSc) Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE) Higher National Diplomas (HND) Irish Higher Certificate	5	8	6	Short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle) qualifications	
Higher National Certificates (HNC) Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE)				4	7

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 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 current qualifications in each country, you will need to consult the website given at the heading of each column. Qualifications in each of these frameworks change from time to time and you need to check the relevant websites for the latest versions (as well as for earlier versions of the framework where these are available). 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 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.
- This leaflet is updated periodically. Check one of the websites for the most up-to-date version.



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Main stages of education/employment

Qualifications can be taken at any age in order to continue or return to education or training

Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

www.qaa.ac.uk

LEVEL

Qualifications and Credit Framework/ National Qualifications Framework for England and Northern Ireland

www.ofqual.gov.uk
www.ccea.org.uk

LEVEL

Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales

www.cqfw.net

LEVEL

National Framework of Qualifications for Ireland

www.qqi.ie

LEVEL

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

www.scqf.org.uk

LEVEL

Professional or postgraduate education, research or employment

8 Doctoral Degrees

8 Vocational Qualifications Level 8

8 Doctoral Degrees

10 Doctoral Degree, Higher Doctorate

12 Doctoral Degrees, Professional Apprenticeship, Professional Development Award (PDA), Award

Higher education
Advanced skills training

7 Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Postgraduate Certificates

7 Vocational Qualifications Level 7

7 Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Postgraduate Certificates

9 Master's Degree, Postgraduate Diploma

11 Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Professional Apprenticeship, SVQ 5, PDA, Postgraduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificates, Award

Entry to professional graduate employment

6 Bachelor's Degrees with Honours, Bachelor's Degrees, Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), 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

8 Honours Bachelor Degree, Higher Diploma

10 Bachelor's Degrees with Honours, Professional Apprenticeship, PDA, Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates, Award

Specialised education and training

5 Foundation Degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diplomas (HND)

5 Vocational Qualifications Level 5, Higher National Diplomas (HND)

5 Foundation Degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diplomas (HND)

7 Ordinary Bachelor Degree

9 Bachelor's/Ordinary Degrees, Technical Apprenticeship, PDA, SVQ 4, Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates, Award

Qualified/Skilled worker

Entry to higher education
Completion of secondary education

3 Access to HE Diploma*

3 Vocational Qualifications Level 3, GCE AS and A Level, Advanced Diplomas (England)

3 ESW, WKS, Vocational Qualifications Level 3, GCE AS and A Level, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Advanced

5 Level 5 Certificate, Leaving Certificate

8 Higher National Diploma (HND), Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE), Technical Apprenticeship, PDA, SVQ 4, Award

Progression to skilled employment.
Continuation of secondary education.

*The Access to HE Diploma is regulated by QAA but is not part of the FHEQ

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 that are current at the time of publication in each country, you will need to consult the website given at the head of each column.

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)

2 Vocational Qualifications Level 2, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Intermediate, GCSEs grade A*-C, ESW, WKS

4 Level 4 Certificate, Leaving Certificate

7 Higher National Certificate (HNC), Modern Apprenticeship, PDA, SVQ 3, Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE), Scottish Baccalaureate, Advanced Higher, Award

Secondary education. Initial entry into employment or further education

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.

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)

1 ESW, WKS, Vocational Qualifications Level 1, GCSEs at grade D-G, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Foundation

3 Level 3 Certificate, Junior Certificate

6 Higher, Modern Apprenticeship, SVQ 3, PDA, National Progression Award (NPA), National Certificate, Award

Qualifications can cross boundaries
- a guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland, September 2014

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)

Entry Level Entry Level Qualifications, ESW

2 Level 2 Certificate

5 National 5, Intermediate 2, Modern Apprenticeship, SVQ 2, NPA, National Certificate, Award

4 National 4, Intermediate 1, SVQ 1, NPA, National Certificate, Award

3 National 3, Access 3, NPA, National Certificate, Award

2 National 2, Access 2, NPA, National Certificate, Award

1 National 1, Access 1, Award

