



THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS...



...Communicating Your NQF in Higher Education and Training

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS (NFQ) ... what the NFQ can say about you

The introduction of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) in 2003 has brought significant change to our education and training system and to the meaning of qualifications in Ireland. All providers who deliver programmes of education and training leading to qualifications recognised through the NFQ have embraced their responsibility to explain these developments to learners. Your continued support in bringing the NFQ closer to the learner through your promotional activity is appreciated and remains important for the successful implementation of the Framework.



PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

As an education or training provider, this guide is aimed at providing you with a simple explanation of how to reference the NFQ in promotional material and suggests how you might use the Framework to effectively promote programmes of study at your institution. This guide is designed to facilitate the provision of important information to your existing and potential learners on the recent changes to the qualifications system in Ireland. The guide offers you support to ensure that promotional and communication activities include comprehensive and accurate information for learners.

WHY REFERENCE THE NFQ IN PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES?

- **CHOICE:** Accurately referencing the NFQ when promoting your education and training programmes allows existing and future learners to make informed choices about the status of the particular programmes you offer.
- **QUALITY:** All education and training qualifications recognised through the NFQ are quality assured. By referencing the NFQ you are communicating the quality of your education and training programmes at home and abroad.

- **Capacity:** By providing information on the variety of entry and progression opportunities for your programmes, you increase your capacity to attract and retain learners.
- **Lifelong Learning:** Raising awareness of the NFQ and its referencing through education and training material supports the realisation of our national objective of lifelong learning.

WHAT IS MEANT BY ‘REFERENCING THE NFQ’ IN YOUR COMMUNICATIONS?

In order to ensure that your current and future students understand how the NFQ can help them to make decisions about their education and training, it is important that the following information is included in your prospectus, website or other promotional material:

- A brief **EXPLANATION OF THE NFQ**.
- A clear reference to the **NFQ LEVEL** of the award to which each programme leads.
- The **AWARD-TYPE** (e.g. Honours Bachelor Degree) associated with each education or training programme.
- The **AWARDING BODY** that makes each award.
- A reference to the **ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION** opportunities associated with each programme.
- Volume of learning or **CREDIT** associated with each education or training programme.

HOW SHOULD I EXPLAIN THE NFQ TO OUR LEARNERS?

You could use the following explanation of the NFQ.

“The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) has been in place since 2003. The NFQ is designed for the development, recognition and award of qualifications based on standards of knowledge, skill and competence acquired by learners. The Framework consists of 10 levels, from basic learning to Doctoral awards. Throughout this prospectus, you will see the NFQ level and Award Type to which a programme leads alongside other related information to help you understand and compare programmes of education and training. The NFQ can help you as the learner to plan your education, training and career progression and help you make informed choices about the qualifications you choose and to recognise the progression routes that may be open to you upon successful completion.

The website for the National Framework of Qualifications – www.nfq.ie – has been designed to meet the individual interests of learners, advisors, employers/recruiters and providers. It is worth visiting for more detailed information about the National Framework of Qualifications.”

MY INSTITUTION PROVIDES MANY DIFFERENT PROGRAMMES THAT LEAD TO QUALIFICATIONS ON THE NFQ. HOW CAN I COMMUNICATE THIS?

It would be helpful for learners if they were informed about the range of award-types available at your institution. A table such as that presented here provides simple information on the award-types by NFQ level available at your Institution. Alternatively you could simply state the following ‘*Institution X provides a range of full time and part-time programmes leading to awards at levels 6 to 10 on the NFQ.*’

[Select the appropriate NFQ levels and award-types to communicate the range of programmes that you provide]

AWARD LEVEL	MAJOR AWARD TYPE*
Level 5	Level 5 Certificate**
Level 6	Higher Certificate or Advanced Certificate**
Level 7	Ordinary Bachelor Degree
Level 8	Honours Bachelor Degree Higher Diploma
Level 9	Post-graduate Diploma Masters Degree
Level 10	Doctoral Degree Higher Doctorate

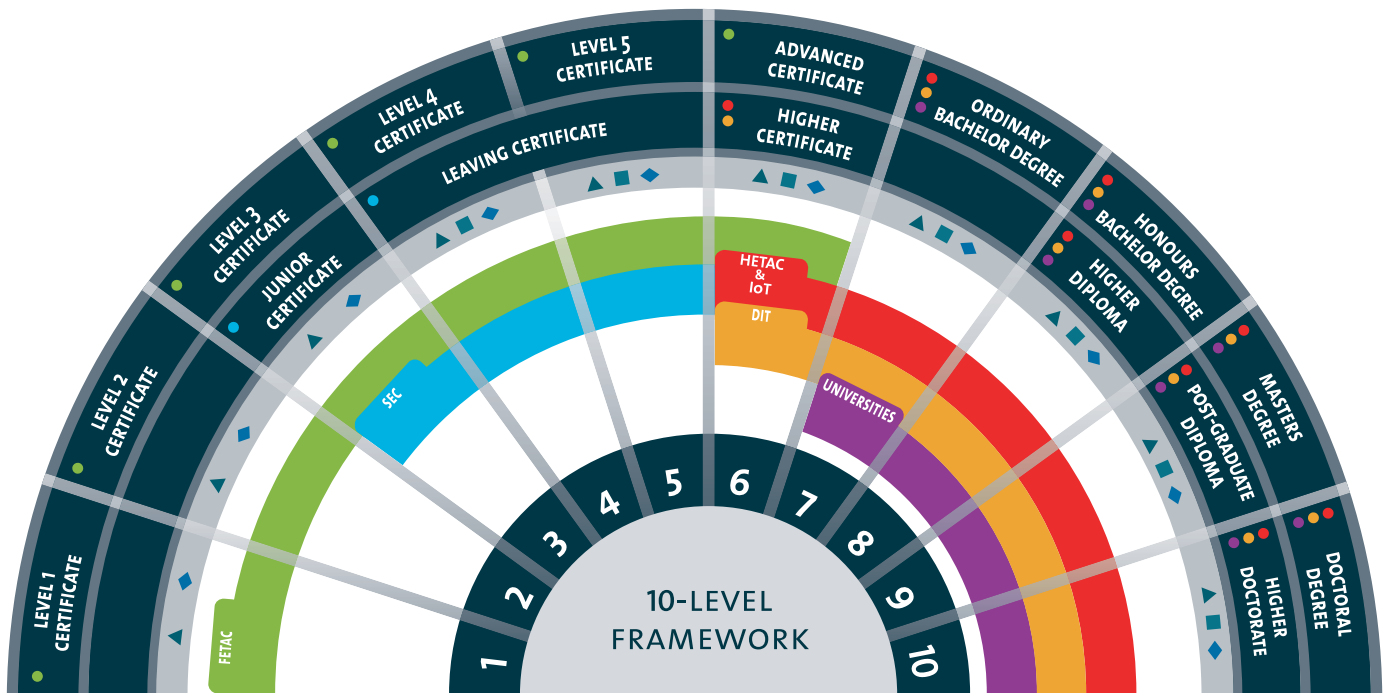
*Higher Education Institutions may provide programmes that lead to non-major awards across levels 5-10 on the NFQ.

** The Level 5 Certificate and the Advanced Certificate are awards made by FETAC.



IS THERE A DIAGRAM I CAN USE TO DESCRIBE THE NFQ?

The 'fan diagram' below illustrates the NFQ, its levels and award-types and could be included in your marketing material. *This diagram should not be altered or customised for use in promotional activities without prior permission from the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland.*



AWARDING BODIES

- FETAC - Further Education and Training Awards Council
- SEC - State Examinations Commission (Department of Education & Science)
- HETAC - Higher Education and Training Awards Council
- IoT - Institutes of Technology (make their own awards at specified levels under Delegated Authority from HETAC)
- DIT - Dublin Institute of Technology
- Universities

AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK

There are four types of award in the National Framework of Qualifications:

- Major Awards: are the principal class of awards made at a level
- ▲ Minor Awards: are for partial completion of the outcomes for a Major Award
- ◆ Supplemental Awards: are for learning that is additional to a Major Award
- ◆ Special Purpose Awards: are for relatively narrow or purpose-specific achievement

ARE THERE EXAMPLES OF HOW TO REFERENCE INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMMES OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING?

Example 1

Named Award: Bachelor of Arts (Early Childhood Education) Honours Degree

Award-Type: Honours Bachelor Degree

Level: NFQ Level 8

Awarding Body: Dublin Institute of Technology

Access: A Leaving Certificate of HC3 in two subjects and passes in another four subjects 2 including a minimum grade of OD3 in Maths and English or Irish, or a comparable qualification. A candidate who does not hold such qualification will be considered for admission on the basis of AP(E)L.

Progression: Graduates who have reached the appropriate level in the final examination may be eligible to progress to Masters programmes at NFQ level 9 at DIT or elsewhere in higher education.

Credit: 180 ECTS

Example 2

Named Award: Graduate Diploma in Child & Adolescent Health Care Practice

Award-Type: Post-Graduate Diploma

Level: NFQ Level 9

Awarding Body: Dublin City University

Access: Direct entry to the programme will be considered for candidates who hold an Honours Bachelor Degree at NFQ Level 8 or comparable, with a minimum of second-class honours, grade two, in a relevant discipline. A candidate who does not hold such a degree will be considered for admission on the basis of AP(E)L and/or on the basis of completion of one or more Access modules.

Progression: May be eligible to progress to MSc in Child & Adolescent Health Care Practice at NFQ level 9.

Credit: 60 ECTS

Example 3

Named Award: Bachelor of Arts in Community Development

Award-Type: Ordinary Bachelor Degree

Level: NFQ Level 7

Awarding Body: Letterkenny Institute of Technology

Access: Higher Certificate in Community Studies or comparable qualification. A candidate who does not hold such a qualification will be considered for admission on the basis of AP(E)L.

Progression: May be eligible to progress to Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Community Development at NFQ level 8.

Credit: 60 ECTS at NFQ level 7



Example 4

Named Award: Certificate in Cyber Psychology

Award-Type: Special Purpose Award

Level: NFQ Level 6

Awarding Body: Institute of Art, Design and Technology

Access: Leaving Certificate Examination or comparable qualification at NFQ Level 4/5. Applicants without this can also be considered based on their prior experience and learning (APEL).

Progression: May be eligible to progress to our BSc (Hons) in Applied Psychology at NFQ level 8 or our BSc (Hons) in Computing in Multimedia Systems / Web Engineering at NFQ 8

Credit: 10 ECTS

Example 5

Named Award: Certificate in Java Development

Award-Type: Supplemental Award

Level: NFQ Level 6

Awarding Body: Institute of Technology Tallaght

Access: If under 23 years applicants must have a grade D3 in a minimum of five subjects in the Leaving Certificate examinations, (this must include Maths and English/Irish) or a FETAC Level 5 qualification or comparable. Mature students (over 23 years) may be exempted from this requirement and are eligible to apply. All applicants must have competence in spoken and written English. Eligible candidates may be interviewed. Candidates would benefit by having previous experience in IT development.

Progression: Candidates successfully completing the programme may be eligible to access the BSc in IT Management at NFQ level 8 available part-time.

Credit: 30 ECTS

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland is responsible for leading the development and implementation of the Framework.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE NFQ AND HOW TO USE IT IN PROMOTING OUR EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES?

The National Framework of Qualifications: www.nfq.ie

CONTACT US AT:

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