

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				7	
Graduate diplomas					Intermediate qualifications within the first cycle
Graduate certificates		9			
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.



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Scottish Credit and Qualifications
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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.



Main stages of education/employment

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
www.scfq.org.uk

**Qualifications and Credit Framework/
National Qualifications Framework for
England and Northern Ireland**
www.ofqual.gov.uk
www.ccea.org.uk

**Credit and Qualifications Framework
for Wales**
www.cqfw.net

**National Framework of Qualifications
for Ireland**
www.nfq.ie

**Framework for higher education
qualifications in England, Wales and
Northern Ireland**
www.qaa.ac.uk/
assuringstandardsandquality/qualifications

LEVEL

LEVEL

LEVEL

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LEVEL

Professional or postgraduate education,
research or employment

12 Professional Development Awards,
Doctoral Degrees

8 Vocational Qualifications Level 8

8 Doctoral Degrees

10 Doctoral Degree,
Higher Doctorate

8 Doctoral Degrees

Higher education
Advanced skills training

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

9 Master's Degree,
Post-graduate Diploma

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

Entry to professional graduate employment

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

8 Honours Bachelor Degree,
Higher Diploma

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

Specialised education and training

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)

7 Ordinary Bachelor Degree

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

Qualified/Skilled worker

8 Higher National Diplomas, SVQ Level 4,
Professional Development Awards,
Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE)

4 Vocational Qualifications Level 4,
Higher National Certificates (HNC)

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

4 Higher National Certificates (HNC),
Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE)

Entry to higher education

Completion of secondary education

7 Professional Development Awards,
Higher National Certificates,
Certificates of Higher Education
(CertHE), SVQ Level 3, Scottish
Baccalaureate, Advanced Highers

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

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

Progression to skilled employment.
Continuation of secondary education.

6 Highers, SVQ Level 3,
Professional Development Awards,
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)

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

Secondary education. Initial entry into
employment or further education

5 Intermediate 2,
Credit Standard Grade, SVQ Level 2,
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)

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

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

4 Intermediate 1,
General Standard Grade, SVQ Level 1,
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)

Entry Level Entry Level Qualifications, ESW

2 Level 2 Certificate

3 Access 3, Foundation Standard Grades,
National Progression Awards,
National Certificates

2 Access 2,
National Progression Awards,
National Certificates

1 Access 1

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

