

## **Report on the alignment of the awards made by the British Computer Society with the Irish National Framework of Qualifications**

### **1. Recommendation and Conditions of Alignment**

#### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that those awards made in Ireland by the British Computer Society (BCS), for which it has sought alignment, should be aligned with the National Framework of Qualifications, to specific levels as indicated in this report.

#### **Conditions of Alignment**

1. BCS may refer to the qualifications indicated in the report as being aligned with the specified levels of the National Framework of Qualifications in Ireland (the NFQ) and recognised as such by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI).
2. BCS will clearly communicate that its unaccredited awards made in Ireland are not aligned with the NFQ or recognised as such by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI). This will be clearly stated in all advertisements, marketing and descriptions associated with such awards and the programmes leading to them, as well as on the transcripts of the awards.
3. BCS will provide the NQAI with information regarding:
  - a. Annual statistics indicating number of learners in Ireland who commence programmes leading to awards to which the alignment refers as well as the number of awards made
  - b. The outcomes of any external quality assurance review to which the awarding body is subject
  - c. Any material change to the quality assurance procedures of the awarding body which impact in any way on the provision in Ireland of the awards to which the alignment refers

- d. Examples of marketing of awards aligned with the NFQ / not aligned with the NFQ
  - e. Any new awards which the awarding body intends to offer in Ireland, for which it is seeking alignment or otherwise.
4. BCS will operate procedures which are consistent with the policies of the NQAI in respect of access, transfer and progression and RPL
  5. The alignment of awards with the NFQ recommended in the alignment report is active as long as the necessary quality assurance arrangements are in place i.e. as long as the pilot regulatory arrangements for qualifications accredited in England, Wales and Northern Ireland when offered in Ireland are in place.

## 2. Level Criteria

The criteria used to determine the comparable levels of awards submitted by BCS for alignment with the NFQ are set out in the document entitled - *Qualifications can cross boundaries – a rough guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland*

[http://www.qualificationsrecognition.ie/recognition/int\\_qual\\_database/uk/documents/CrossBoundaries.pdf](http://www.qualificationsrecognition.ie/recognition/int_qual_database/uk/documents/CrossBoundaries.pdf)

England, Wales and Northern Ireland National Qualifications Framework		National Framework of Qualifications for Ireland
Entry Level	is comparable to	Level 2
Level 1	is comparable to	Level 3
Level 2	is comparable to	Level 4
Level 3	is comparable to	Level 5
Level 4	is comparable to	Level 6
Level 5	is comparable to	Level 6/ 7
Level 6	is comparable to	Level 8
Level 7	is comparable to	Level 9
Level 8	is comparable to	Level 10

### 3. Sources of Evidence and Level Recommendations

#### Sources of Evidence

All qualifications submitted for alignment by BCS were checked against the list of accredited qualifications published by Ofqual at <http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk>

#### Level Recommendations

It is recommended that BCS awards submitted should be aligned with the NFQ as tabled below.

<b>Title of qualification</b>	<b>NDAQ Qualification Reference Number</b>	<b>Guided Learning Hours</b>	<b>UK Qualification Type (where applicable)</b>	<b>England, Wales and Northern Ireland National Qualifications Framework Level (NQF)</b>	<b>Irish National Framework of Qualifications Level (NFQ)</b>
Level 2 Award in Creative Digital Media (Digital Cre8or)	500/3270/7	48	VRQ	NQF Level 2	NFQ Level 4
Level 2 Award in Creative Digital Media (Digital Media Full Award)	500/3763/8	96	VRQ	NQF Level 2	NFQ Level 4

#### **4. Additional Information**

##### **(a) England, Wales & Northern Ireland Vocational Education and Training Award Frameworks**

The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) is a new way of recognising skills and qualifications in England, Wales & Northern Ireland. From Autumn 2008 to late 2010, the QCF will be implemented gradually to replace the current qualifications system, as arranged through the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The QCF is a unit-based framework. Units are the building blocks of all qualifications and all units within the QCF will be developed within a standard format. This format is based on the following design features:

- unit title
- learning outcomes
- assessment criteria
- level

- credit

Every unit and qualification in the framework will have a credit value (one credit represents 10 hours, showing how much time it takes to complete) and a level between entry level and level 8 (showing how difficult it is). There are three sizes of qualifications in the QCF:

- Awards (1 to 12 credits)
- Certificates (13 to 36 credits)
- Diplomas (37 credits or more).

The QCF will be aligned with frameworks in Scotland, Wales and Europe (Levels 1 to 8 of the QCF have been mapped to levels 1 to 8 of the European Qualifications Framework - EQF) enabling learners to transfer their achievements across national boundaries.

## **(b) Qualification Size and Type**

### **Information regarding the size of the qualifications offered by BCS in Ireland**

The UK NQF does not consider the size of the qualification when attributing an NQF level to the qualification. The NQF level is determined by assessing the level of demand placed on the learner rather than the volume of learning that they must undertake prior to attaining the qualification. In order to provide information regarding the volume of learning typically undertaken prior to attaining the award, a column entitled 'Guided Learning Hours' is included in the alignment table above. The definition of Guided Learning Hours provided by the NQF is as follows:

*'A notional measure of the substance of a qualification. It includes an estimate of the time that might be allocated to direct teaching or instruction, together with other structured learning time, such as directed assignments, assessments on the job or supported individual study and practice. It excludes learner-initiated private study.'*

The Guided Learning Hours have been included in this report to clarify for learners and providers the typical time allocated to teaching the programme leading to each qualification listed.

### **Information regarding qualifications offered by BCS in Ireland**

**Vocationally-Related Qualifications (VRQs)** are nationally recognised qualifications in the UK designed to bring tangible business benefits through their strong emphasis on practical skills and assessment.