



Údarás Náisiúnta
Cáilíochtaí na hÉireann
National Qualifications
Authority of Ireland



Information bulletin 2: The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning

This is the second information bulletin about the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland is the National Coordination Point for the EQF. As such, the Qualifications Authority is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the EQF in Ireland. Communicating EQF developments to national stakeholders is a key part of this responsibility. This bulletin is intended to inform you of the EQF and of the conclusions of the process to reference the NFQ to the EQF.

If you have any queries, please contact us by email to eqf@nqai.ie or by telephone on (01) 8871500.

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EQF: An overview

EQF is an overarching qualifications framework which links countries' qualifications together, acting as a translation device to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe.

The core of the EQF consists of [8 qualifications levels](#) which are described through learning outcomes (knowledge, skill and competence). The principal aims of EQF are to promote citizens' mobility between countries and to facilitate their lifelong learning.

The Referencing process

Ireland completed the process to reference the NFQ to the EQF in June 2009. The Qualifications Authority convened a [National Steering Committee](#) to assist it in this process. The Steering Committee included three international experts as well as representatives of FETAC, HETAC, IUA and the NCCA. The Steering Committee used the [Referencing Criteria and Procedures](#) agreed by the EQF Advisory Group. The EQF Advisory Group was established to coordinate implementation of the EQF at European level. The Qualifications Authority participates in this group.

Draft versions of the Referencing Report were discussed by the Qualifications Authority's Consultative Group and by wider stakeholders at a national EQF seminar held in April. A draft of the report was also published on the Qualifications Authority's website with an invitation for comments. The final Referencing Report was adopted by the Qualifications

Authority on 28 May 2009, subject to the agreement of the bodies responsible for quality assuring qualifications in the NFQ. This agreement was obtained in early June 2009. The second stage of EQF implementation, introducing a reference to the EQF in all new Certificate and Diploma Supplements, should be completed by 2012.

The Referencing Report

The final version of the Referencing Report is available on the Qualifications Authority's [website](#). The main conclusions are that:

- The referencing process establishes a clear and demonstrable link between the levels in the NFQ and the level descriptors of the EQF as illustrated by the table:

EQF Levels	Irish NFQ Levels
1	1
	2
2	3
3	4
4	5
5	6
6	7
	8
7	9
8	10

The referencing process has demonstrated that:

- The NFQ, and the qualifications within it, are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes, and are linked to credit systems and arrangements for the Recognition of Prior Learning
- There are transparent criteria and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications in the NFQ, which are being implemented progressively by the different awarding bodies and providers of education and training.
- The different quality assurance systems operating in Irish education and training underpin the NFQ and its implementation. The relevant quality assurance bodies have been consulted on the referencing process and have stated their agreement to it.

Further information on EQF

Further information on the EQF and the referencing process, including Frequently Asked Questions, can be found on our website at www.nqai.ie/interdev_eqf.html