

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

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Policies and Criteria for the Inclusion in, or Alignment with, the National Framework of Qualifications of the Awards of Certain Awarding Bodies

Introduction

These policies and criteria concern the final area of policy development for the National Framework of Qualifications prior to moving to full implementation of the Framework. They concern the recognition of the awards (or the learning outcomes associated with them) of certain awarding bodies which are not already recognised through the National Framework of Qualifications and sets out the policy approach for this.

The policies and criteria have been prepared by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland following a detailed consultative process in relation to professional and international awards. The Authority has issued two formal consultative papers in relation to these awards – the first in May 2002 and a subsequent, more detailed, paper in September 2004.

In addition, the Authority has also sought and considered submissions from relevant stakeholders, and met with a number of these stakeholders on a bi-lateral and a multilateral basis. Details of the consultative process are available on the Authority's website here:

http://www.nqai.ie/framework_consultation.html

In April 2006 the Authority published a consultative paper as the culmination of the consultative process in these areas. It reflected the emerging position of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland on how certain awards and learning outcomes can be

recognised within the context of the National Framework of Qualifications. The aim of the Authority was that this paper would form the basis of policies and criteria to be adopted in summer 2006. Thus, in the consultative paper the Authority made draft policies and criteria publicly available and hosted a multi-lateral briefing session with relevant stakeholders on 24 May 2006. These policies and criteria have been developed further taking account of the briefing session and feedback on the consultative paper.

Nature of professional approval / accreditation / recognition

In its work in relation to the development of these policies and criteria, the Authority has noted that there is no single set of arrangements within which professional regulatory bodies operate and how they relate to education and training providers and awarding bodies.

The Authority considers that there is an optimum model for how any professional regulatory body established in the future with responsibility in relation to regulation of a profession or of a professional title would relate to education and training providers and awarding bodies and that this would be as follows:

- The professional body would not be an awarding body but would set standards for the recognition of professional qualifications / titles and accredit / approve / recognise (there is no agreed single wording for this function) the awards of an awarding body and the learning programmes of a provider as meeting its needs as a professional regulator (in many cases, the awarding body and the provider would be the same body). This is important to avoid a multiplicity of awarding bodies and overlapping functions in the context of the roles of providers, awarding bodies and professional bodies.
- The definition of the needs of the professional body in terms of the performance of its functions to accredit / approve / recognise should be established in terms of the anticipated learning outcomes. While the duration of programmes and the standards of entrants to programmes may also be relevant in the context of the EU Directive

on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2005/36/EC), it is important that the recognition of qualifications under the Directive follows a transparent process which can easily facilitate a comparison of qualifications and aid the identification of cases where they may be a “substantial difference” between the qualification held and that required. The focus on learning outcomes is an emerging feature of European policy and is a key part of the emerging European Qualifications Framework as well as being an essential element of the National Framework of Qualifications.

- The needs of the professional body in terms of the performance of its functions to accredit / approve / recognise should be met in advance of the commencement of a programme and may be subsequently verified on the completion of a programme so as to ensure that learners know of the professional use of a qualification before commencing a course. In essence, while the legal role of a particular regulatory authority is to recognise and approve qualifications and standards for the profession, it is important, in the best interests of learners, that there is active collaboration between the parties in regard to the respective roles of regulatory bodies, providers and awarding bodies. The programmes leading to awards which are accredited / approved / recognised by a professional body should be subject to transparent quality assurance procedures with an internal and external element. This is in keeping with emerging developments in regard to the Copenhagen and Bologna processes and the proposals for a European Qualifications Framework.
- The performance by the professional body of its functions should be as closely aligned as possible with the various stages of programmatic development and with the internal and external quality assurance associated with the programme and the award.
- The professional regulator would itself, ideally, not directly provide the learning opportunities.

At the same time, the Authority notes that this model is one that is not generally in place, but is one that is being put in place in new legislation as it emerges.

Bodies with Statutory Power to Make Awards

There are a number of bodies that have statutory power to make awards with a parallel statutory power as the bodies whose awards are already in the Framework. The Authority considers that it is appropriate that it should seek to put in place processes whereby the awards of such awarding bodies can be included in the Framework.

Likewise, the Authority notes that there are a number of professional regulatory bodies that make awards or recognise the attainment of learning outcomes where there is not a parallel award that is already in the Framework in relation to the provision. The Authority considers it fully appropriate that the learning outcomes attained by learners in this context can be recognised within the National Framework of Qualifications.

Which awards are to be recognised through the National Framework of Qualifications?

The policies and criteria concern the recognition through the Framework of the following:

- The awards of Irish bodies which make awards on a statutory basis (where the body's awards are not yet in the Framework and where the awards cannot be withdrawn)
- The learning outcomes associated with the awards of certain Irish bodies which do not make awards on a statutory basis but which recognise the attainment by learners of learning outcomes in a formal way associated with the legal regulation of the operation of a profession or of a professional title by such bodies.
- The awards of certain bodies from outside the State which make awards in Ireland.

The Authority recognises that there are bodies which make awards in Ireland and which do not have the formal recognition of the State in so doing. The Authority notes that many of these bodies have been operating for many years and considers it very important that the learning outcomes associated with the awards that these bodies make can also be recognised in the context of the Framework. The Authority notes the clear provisions of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999, which allow for the submission of programmes for validation to the two Awards Councils – the Further Education and Training Awards Council and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council. Thus, the Authority notes that Ireland is in a unique position in international terms in having State awards available for all provision of learning opportunities within the State and considers that no learning provider or non-statutory awarding body should feel excluded from working with the Awards Councils. Indeed, such providers and awarding bodies also have the opportunity of working with other State awarding bodies such as the universities and the Dublin Institute of Technology.

Mode of referencing to the Framework

These policies and criteria provide that there can be two modes for the referencing to the Framework of such awards and learning outcomes, as follows:

- By inclusion in the Framework
- By alignment with the Framework.

All of the awards that are and have been recognised to date through the Framework are recognised through inclusion in the Framework. It is noted that this inclusion in the Framework can be:

- Through Framework award-types and their descriptors, or
- At a level in the Framework on an overall best-fit basis.

Alignment with the Framework for awards and learning outcomes will also be implemented along these lines.

Thus, it is the intention of the Authority that the Framework will be used in a broad context to recognise awards and learning outcomes and that awards can either be included in the Framework (where they are made on a statutory basis) or aligned with the Framework (where they are international awards being made in Ireland or where they are within the category of certain awards linked with regulatory bodies).

In practice, it is the view of the Authority that for whatever purpose the Framework is being put to by the State and by other stakeholders, all of the awards that are recognised through the Framework, whether they are included or aligned, should be understood to be made within the context of the Framework. It is important to note that for an award to be made in this context, there should be associated quality assurance procedures relating to the award and also relating to programmes leading to it. In the context of its work, in looking at quality assurance arrangements, it has been noted by the Authority that in some cases the quality assurance of awarding bodies relates only to the award and that there can be programmes which are not quality assured. This is referred to in some detail in the subsequent policies and criteria.

In instances where this is the case, and where a stakeholder or the State is seeking to use the Framework for the purposes of defined awards and programmes leading to them, the Authority would suggest that programmes that are not quality assured should not be used.

Obligations on Certain Providers

Under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999, many providers of education and training including the Institutes of Technology, FÁS, Fáilte Ireland, Teagasc, Bord Iascaigh Mhara and Vocational Education Committees, are to submit their programmes for validation to either the Further Education and Training Awards Council or the Higher Education and Training Awards Council. This requirement does not apply where any such providers have authority delegated by a Council to make awards themselves. Furthermore, this requirement does not take away from their freedom to also seek to have awards made by other awarding bodies in addition to the Further Education and Training Awards Council or the Higher Education and Training Awards Council. These policies and criteria do not in any way negate the requirement on such providers.

Outline of Document

This document has three subsequent sections to it, each of which set out policies and criteria in relation to certain awards as follows:

- Policies and Criteria for the Inclusion in the Framework of the Awards of Certain Irish bodies which make awards on a statutory basis (Group A awards)
- Policies and Criteria for the Alignment with the Framework of learning outcomes associated with the Awards of Certain Irish bodies which regulate professions (Group B learning outcomes)
- Policies and Criteria for the Alignment with the Framework of the Awards of Certain bodies from outside the State which make awards in Ireland (Group C awards).

The following is a short diagrammatic summary of Framework arrangements, including those set out in this paper:

<i>Type of awards</i>	<i>Manner of inclusion</i>	<i>Process for considering inclusion</i>	<i>Awarding Body</i>	<i>Quality Assurance</i>
New Framework Awards	Award-type	Implemented by FETAC, DIT, HETAC	FETAC, DIT, HETAC	Qualifications Act
		Implemented by SEC / University	SEC, Universities	Universities Act, NUI legislation, Education Act
Other Statutory Irish Awards	Award-type or level	Body to apply to Authority. Authority to put in place a process involving FETAC / HETAC / DIT / SEC / universities etc as appropriate	Other statutory awarding body	Likely to involve FETAC / HETAC / SEC or IUQB

<i>Type of awards</i>	<i>Manner of inclusion</i>	<i>Process for considering inclusion</i>	<i>Awarding Body</i>	<i>Quality Assurance</i>
Irish regulatory bodies under European Union Directives for Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications	Learning outcomes of certain awards associated with Award-type or level	Normally FETAC and HETAC	Irish Regulatory bodies	Normally FETAC or HETAC
Bodies from other jurisdictions making awards in Ireland	Award-type or level	Body to apply to Authority. Authority to put in place a process normally involving FETAC and HETAC	Bodies from other jurisdictions	Preferably from host jurisdiction. If not, normally FETAC or HETAC

Group A – Policies and Criteria for the Inclusion in the Framework of the Awards of Certain Irish bodies which make awards on a statutory basis

Background

These policies and criteria concern all awards made on an Irish statutory basis other than those of the State Examinations Commission, the Further Education and Training Awards Council, the Higher Education and Training Awards Council, the universities, the Dublin Institute of Technology and any institution with authority delegated from an awards Council to make awards. The awards of these bodies are already included in the Framework.

The Authority, in its discussions on the inclusion or recognition of awards, has noted that there are a number of bodies which make awards on the basis of statutory authority to do so and these awards cannot be withdrawn.

It is the intention of the Authority that it would be a voluntary process for an awarding body to submit itself to the policies and criteria set out below. There may be some occasions where such an awarding body makes an award and where there is already a parallel education and training award which is in the Framework – where this is the case, the Authority does not see any added value in the inclusion of the additional award in the Framework, although, given its statutory basis, the awarding body may wish to see such an award included in the Framework.

The Authority notes that the policies and criteria provide for quality assurance arrangements in line with agreed approaches in both the Bologna and Copenhagen processes.

Mode of Referencing to Framework

The Authority has no role in setting the standards of the awards in question. There are two options for the inclusion of these awards in the Framework:

- through the Framework award-types and their descriptors

- at a level in the Framework on an overall “best fit” basis.

Processes of inclusion

A four-stage process of inclusion is set out.

Stage 1

The applicant awarding body applies in writing to the Authority seeking confirmation of its eligibility to submit its awards for inclusion in the Framework. The eligibility requirement is that the applicant awarding body has the statutory power to make awards that cannot be withdrawn.

Should the requirements of stage 1 be attained the process moves to the second stage.

Stage 2

The applicant awarding body submits a detailed application to the Authority. This application will:

- identify all of the award(s) in question that it makes on a statutory basis that cannot be withdrawn and may identify any awards that it has previously made on a statutory basis, that cannot be withdrawn
- identify the award(s) in a format that specifies the learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skill and competence. These will refer to the sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence established for the Framework
- identify the quality assurance arrangements associated with the operation of the applicant body’s awarding and related functions
- indicate a commitment from the applicant awarding body to operate in a manner consistent with the Framework policies and criteria and the associated procedures for access, transfer and progression, including principles for credit accumulation and transfer and for the recognition of prior learning, and to assist, as appropriate, in the implementation of a co-ordinated national approach to the recognition of international awards.

A body or bodies will be identified to process the application on behalf of the Authority. The possible processing bodies are:

- The State Examinations Commission
- The Further Education and Training Awards Council
- The Higher Education and Training Awards Council
- a university, a number of universities and/or the Irish Universities Quality Board
- The Dublin Institute of Technology
- A committee representing an appropriate combination of these

In deciding on the body or bodies to process the application, the Authority will consult with the applicant awarding body and with the organisations potentially involved in processing the application. The body or bodies processing an application on behalf of the Authority are referred to as 'the processing body' in the remainder of this section.

When the Authority has made a decision on the process for considering the application, the process moves to the third stage.

Stage 3

The processing body considers the application having regard to standard setting approaches, award standards, programme validation arrangements, quality assurance and assessment procedures applied or monitored by the applicant awarding body to ensure that the learning outcomes can be achieved.

The processing body agrees quality assurance procedures with the applicant body for continuing implementation by the applicant body. These quality assurance arrangements are to allow for changes to the awards of the applicant body where the changes are not significantly different from the previous awards in question and may include conditions which may, inter alia, relate to the communication by the applicant body of the outcomes of the process.

The processing body reviews the titles of the continuing awards of the applicant body and agrees with the applicant body to the titles of awards to be used in future in a manner not inconsistent with the titles of awards already in the Framework.

The processing body makes a proposal on the inclusion of awards of the applicant awarding body to the Authority, with the agreement of the applicant awarding body. This proposal may be subject to conditions set by the processing body.

When the processing body makes a proposal on the inclusion of awards of the applicant awarding body to the Authority, the process moves to the fourth stage.

Stage 4

The Authority will consider the proposal made by the processing body. It will either agree the proposal or ask the processing body or bodies to reconsider for stated reasons.

When the Authority has agreed the proposal the award or awards in question are then included in the Framework and this information will be published by the Authority.

The processing body will ensure that the agreed quality assurance procedures are implemented and will review at least once every five years the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures that have been agreed with the applicant body for continuing implementation by the applicant body.

The applicant body will provide information, as appropriate and when requested, on its continuing awarding arrangements.

Group B – Policies and Criteria for the Alignment with the Framework of learning outcomes associated with the Awards of Certain Irish bodies which regulate professions

Background

The Authority, in its discussions on the inclusion or recognition of awards, has noted that there are a number of Irish bodies which do not have statutory authority to make awards, although they do have a function in relation to the regulation of professions under European Union Directives for the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications. The regulation of a profession may relate to practice in a profession or to the use of certain professional titles.

It is set out above that the Authority's optimum model for how a professional regulatory body would relate to education and training providers and awarding bodies would be that the professional body would not be an awarding body but would accredit/approve/recognise (there is no agreed single wording for this function) the awards of an awarding body and the learning programmes of a provider as meeting its needs as a professional regulator (in many cases, the awarding body and the provider would be the same body).

However, in many cases, this optimum model does not apply and there are some professional regulators which accredit/approve/recognise the attainment of learning outcomes attained by a learner for the purpose of their professional regulation where there is not a parallel education and training award made. Furthermore, there are also professional regulators whose registration requirement requires the attainment, on the basis of continuing professional development, by their members of further learning outcomes and often there is not a parallel education and training award made.

The Authority considers that it is appropriate to establish a mechanism through which the existing and previous learning outcomes attained by learners and associated with the regulation by certain professional regulators, where there is not a parallel education and

training award, should be aligned with the National Framework of Qualifications. Thus there can be appropriate recognition in terms of alignment with the Framework of the learning outcomes associated with such awards. The Authority considers that this mechanism can be applied where the professional registration may be withdrawn, given that the learning outcomes have been attained. Also, the Authority considers that, given its preference where an optimal model would mean that there will increasingly be parallel education and training awards for the learning outcomes attained, this policy should only apply for the alignment of learning outcomes and their associated arrangements, where such arrangements are in place at the time of the adoption of this policy. The aim is that the learning outcomes associated with awards which a professional regulating body commences to make after the adoption of these policies would be aligned with the Framework.

It is also the case that it is possible that a professional regulator may have some awards in Group A set out above and may have awards which it makes in the context of learning outcomes (Group B) relevant to this section.

It is also the case that it is possible that a professional regulator may only have some awards which it (or indeed a previous regulator of the same profession to which it is legally a successor) has previously made and may apply in relation to these only.

It is the intention of the Authority that it would be a voluntary process for a professional regulator to submit itself to the policies and criteria set out below.

The Authority notes that the policies and criteria provide for quality assurance arrangements in line with agreed approaches in both the Bologna and Copenhagen processes.

The Authority notes that there are a number of bodies whose awards are already in the Framework – the State Examinations Commission, the Further Education and Training Awards Council, the Higher Education and Training Awards Council, the universities, the

Dublin Institute of Technology and any institution with authority delegated from an Awards Council to make awards.

The Authority considers that the alignment with the Framework of the learning outcomes associated with the awards of certain Irish bodies which regulate professions will normally be a responsibility of the Further Education and Training Awards Council and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council, given their statutory remit. Thus it is through the recognition processes of the Councils that the Authority considers that there can be Framework alignment of such awards. These policies and criteria seek to facilitate this. In cases where the alignment process may span levels where both Councils make awards, the Authority considers that the Councils should co-operate in implementing the policies and criteria.

In some particular cases, the Authority may agree to a process, in line with the general thrust of these policies and criteria, being put in place by the State Examinations Commission, the universities, the Dublin Institute of Technology, or by some appropriate combination of these bodies acting together or with an Awards Council.

Mode of Referencing to Framework

The Authority has no role in setting the standards of the awards in question. There are two options for the alignment with the Framework of the learning outcomes associated with the awards:

- through the Framework award-types and their descriptors
- at a level in the Framework on an overall “best fit” basis.

Process of Alignment

The Authority considers that it is appropriate for each of the Awards Councils to establish its own processes and procedures for alignment in line with these policies and criteria,

that such policies and criteria would allow for appropriate co-operative work between the Councils and that each of the Councils would inform the Authority when such processes and procedures have been established. An outline of the areas to be covered in the Councils' policies and criteria is set out below.

The processes and procedures to be established by the Councils should also provide for a transitional alignment process for the awards of bodies already recognised by them, as appropriate, in line with the nature of the Authority's policies and criteria.

Outline Process

A 3-stage outline process of alignment is set out.

Stage 1

The applicant body applies in writing to an Awards Council or jointly to the Awards Councils seeking confirmation of its eligibility to submit its awards for alignment of the learning outcomes associated with them with the Framework.

Should the requirements of stage 1 be attained the process moves to the second stage.

Stage 2

The applicant body submits a detailed application to the Council. This application will:

- identify all relevant award(s) that it makes (on the date of the commencement of this policy) and may identify any awards that it has previously made
- identify the award(s) in a format that specifies the learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skill and competence. These will refer to the sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence established
- identify the quality assurance arrangements associated with the operation of the applicant body's awarding and related functions
- indicate a commitment from the applicant body to operate in a manner consistent with Framework policies and criteria and the associated procedures for access,

transfer and progression, including principles for credit accumulation and transfer and for the recognition of prior learning, and to assist, as appropriate, in the implementation of a co-ordinated national approach to the recognition of international awards

The Council considers the application having regard to standard setting approaches, award standards, programme validation arrangements, quality assurance and assessment procedures applied or monitored by the applicant body to ensure that the learning outcomes can be achieved.

The Council agrees quality assurance procedures with the applicant body for continuing implementation by the applicant body. These quality assurance arrangements are to allow for changes to the awards of the applicant body where the changes are not significantly different from the previous awards and may include conditions which may, inter alia, relate to the communication by the applicant body of the outcomes of the process.

The Council reviews the titles of the continuing awards of the applicant body and agrees with the applicant body to the titles of awards to be used in future in a manner not inconsistent with the titles of awards already in the Framework.

The Council decides on the alignment with the Framework of the award or awards of the applicant body and this information will be published by the Council.

Stage 3

The Councils inform the Authority on a regular basis of any decisions that they have made in relation to the alignment with the Framework of the learning outcomes of awards of applicant bodies under these policies and criteria.

The applicant body will provide information, as appropriate and when requested, to the Council/s on its continuing awarding arrangements.

Each Council will ensure that the agreed quality assurance procedures are implemented and will review at least once every five years the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures that have been agreed with the applicant body for continuing implementation by the applicant body.

Group C – Policies and Criteria for the Alignment with the Framework of the Awards of Certain bodies from outside the State which make awards in Ireland

The Authority, in its discussions on the inclusion or recognition of awards, has noted that there are a number of bodies from other jurisdictions which make awards following programmes undertaken by learners in Ireland.

The Authority considers that it is appropriate to develop policies and criteria for the alignment with the Framework of certain awards made by national awarding bodies from another jurisdiction that have a status in law or are otherwise recognised as having authority to make awards that have national recognition in their host jurisdiction and whose awards are included in national frameworks or, where such a framework is not in place, in an equivalent national tool for relating qualifications to each other, where such awards are made following the successful completion of programmes by learners in Ireland.

It is of note that the Authority, with the agreement of Irish awarding bodies, agreed with UK regulatory authorities the cross-referencing of the Irish Framework to Frameworks in place in the United Kingdom in 2005. This cross-referencing was published as a Rough Guide by the Authority in July 2005. The alignment of the awards of UK bodies will be undertaken in the context of this work.

It is also of note that the Authority has agreed arrangements up to the end of 2009 with the relevant UK regulatory authorities in relation to the quality assurance of vocational education and training awards accredited in England, Wales and Northern Ireland when offered in Ireland. This policy provides for the alignment of such awards with the Irish Framework while noting that the awarding bodies making such UK awards may also be making other awards in Ireland that are not accredited in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Authority considers that the alignment with the Framework of the awards of bodies from other jurisdictions which make awards following programmes in Ireland is normally a responsibility of the Authority itself and of the Further Education and Training Awards

Council and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council, given their statutory remit. In cases where the alignment process may span levels where both Councils make awards, the Authority will work with both Councils in implementing the policies and criteria.

In some particular cases, the Authority may agree to a process, in line with the general thrust of these policies and criteria, being put in place with the support of the State Examinations Commission, the universities, the Dublin Institute of Technology, or by some appropriate combination of these bodies acting together or with an Awards Council.

Mode of Referencing to Framework

The Authority has no role in setting the standards of the awards in question. There are two options for the alignment of these awards with the Framework:

- through the Framework award-types and their descriptors
- at a level in the Framework on an overall “best fit” basis.

Definition

The awarding bodies must have a status in law or be otherwise recognised as having authority to make awards that have national recognition in their home jurisdiction. Furthermore, the awards of the awarding bodies must be included in the national frameworks in their home jurisdictions or, where such a Framework is not in place, in an equivalent national tool for relating qualifications to each other. There must be a requirement for quality assurance in the home jurisdiction which is external to the awarding body itself. The awards of such awarding bodies to be aligned with the Irish Framework must be made following the successful completion of programmes by learners in Ireland.

The process may also provide for the alignment of awards of such awarding bodies where such awards are not made within the home jurisdiction of the awarding body and where such

awards are based on or linked to the types of awards that the awarding body makes in the home jurisdiction.

Process of Alignment

A 4-stage outline process of alignment is set out.

Stage 1

The applicant awarding body applies in writing to the Authority seeking confirmation of its eligibility to submit its awards for inclusion in the Framework. The eligibility requirement is that

- The awarding body must have a status in law or be otherwise recognised as having authority to make awards that have national recognition in its home jurisdiction
- the awards of the awarding bodies must be included in the national framework or, where such a Framework is not in place, in an equivalent national tool for relating qualifications to each other (The process may also provide for the alignment of awards of such awarding bodies where such awards are not made within the home jurisdiction of the awarding body and where such awards are based on or linked to the types of awards that the awarding body makes in the home jurisdiction).
- There must be a requirement for quality assurance in the home jurisdiction which is external to the awarding body itself
- The awards of such awarding bodies to be aligned with the Irish Framework must be made following the successful completion of programmes in Ireland by learners.

Should the requirements of stage 1 be attained the process moves to the second stage.

Stage 2

The applicant awarding body submits a detailed application to the Authority. This application will:

- identify all of the award(s) in question that it makes that cannot be withdrawn and may identify any awards that it has previously made
- identify how these awards are included in the national framework or the equivalent mechanism in which the state recognises the awarding bodies in its home jurisdiction
- identify the body which is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the national framework or the equivalent mechanism in which the state recognises the awarding bodies in its home jurisdiction
- identify the body which is responsible for the external quality assurance of the awarding body indicate a commitment from the applicant awarding body to operate in a manner consistent with the Framework policies and criteria and the associated procedures for access, transfer and progression, including principles for credit accumulation and transfer and for the recognition of prior learning, and to assist, as appropriate, in the implementation of a co-ordinated national approach to the recognition of international awards.

The Authority will work with the Further Education and Training Awards Council and / or the Higher Education and Training Awards Council as appropriate in processing the application.

Stage 3

The Authority and the relevant Council/s will consider the relevant application in consultation with the relevant Framework body and external quality assurance body from the home jurisdiction of the awarding body.

Where the external quality assurance of the home jurisdiction of the awarding body does not extend to outside of the home jurisdiction, the Council/s will agree quality assurance procedures with the applicant body for continuing implementation by the applicant body and may include conditions which may, inter alia, relate to the communication by the applicant body of the outcomes of the process. These quality assurance arrangements are to allow for

changes to the awards of the applicant body where the changes are not significantly different from the previous awards.

Where the external quality assurance of the home jurisdiction of the awarding body extends to outside of the home jurisdiction, the Council/s may set conditions which may, inter alia, relate to the communication by the applicant body of the outcomes of the process.

Where the external quality assurance of the home jurisdiction of the awarding body relates only to the award itself and not to programmes leading to it, this will be made clear in any alignment. In such circumstances, the Authority will seek to ensure that the differences between quality assured programmes leading to awards included in the Framework or aligned with the Framework and those not quality assured are brought to the attention of those who seek to use the Framework for purposes relating to both awards and programmes.

Having regard to the external quality assurance arrangements in place and the positioning of the awards of the applicant body in its home jurisdiction, the Authority and the relevant Council/s will consider the application.

The Authority and the relevant Council/s will review the titles of the continuing awards of the applicant body and agree with the applicant body to the titles of awards to be used in future in a manner not inconsistent with the titles of awards already in the Framework.

The Authority and the relevant Council/s will agree to the alignment of the awards of the applicant awarding body with the agreement of the applicant awarding body and this information will be published by the Authority.

Stage 4

Where the external quality assurance of the home jurisdiction of the awarding body does not extend to outside of the home jurisdiction, each Council will ensure that the agreed quality assurance procedures are implemented and will review at least once every five years the

effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures that have been agreed with the applicant body for continuing implementation by the applicant body. The applicant awarding body will provide information, as appropriate and when requested, to the Authority and Council/s on its continuing awarding arrangements.