

INTERNATIONALISATION REGISTER

NEW ARRANGEMENTS TO APPLY FROM 01 JANUARY 2011

The *New Immigration Regime for Full-Time non-European Economic Area (EEA) Students* was published in September 2010.¹ It contains a number of recommendations regarding immigration policy which have been adopted by Government. Some of these recommendations refer to the administration of the Internationalisation Register, a task which is currently carried out by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), on behalf of the Departments of Justice and Law Reform, and of Education and Skills.

It should be noted that the NQAI is due to amalgamate with the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), incorporating the functions of the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB), to form a new organisation dealing with qualifications and quality assurance.² The newly amalgamated organisation is expected to be responsible for regulating international education programmes, including the establishment of a Code of Practice and Quality Mark for the provision of programmes of education and training to international learners.³ The Code of Practice will include provisions relating to marketing and recruitment, enrolment, fees, information, accommodation, academic matters, support services, protection for learners and complaints procedures. There will also be a requirement for providers to ensure that awards are recognised through the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The Quality Mark will indicate compliance with the Code of Practice. While compliance with the Quality Mark and Code of Practice will not be mandatory, it is envisaged that possession of the Quality Mark will be necessary for inclusion on the Register in the future.

In the interim, the following clarifies the implications of the new immigration regime for Non-EEA Students, for the administration of the Internationalisation Register from **01 January 2011**.

¹ New immigration regime for full-time non-EEA students, September 2010, <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/New%20Immigration%20Regime%20for%20Full%20Time%20non-EEA%20Students>

² Amalgamation of Qualifications and Quality Assurance Bodies, Consultation Document on implementation, May 2009, <http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?pcategory=17216&ecategory=52369&language=EN>

³ See *Investing in Global Relationships: Ireland's International Education Strategy 2010-2015*; September 2010, <http://www.merrionstreet.ie/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/GLOBAL-REPORT-Sept-20101.pdf>

1. Programmes Eligible for Inclusion in the Internationalisation Register

Recommendation 1 (R1) of the New Immigration Regime states that new procedures should operate on a differentiated basis and that programmes should be divided into two categories (a) Degree Programmes and (b) Language and Non Degree Programmes.

(a) Degree Programmes

Definition and interpretation

For the purposes of the implementation of R1 a Degree Programme applies to a “nationally accredited higher education programme at National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) level 7 or above”⁴ (see appendix 1 for NFQ ‘fan diagram’).

A *higher education programme* at levels 7-10 of the NFQ is a programme which leads to one of the following awards, or to an award that is deemed to be comparable:

- Ordinary Bachelor Degree
- Honours Bachelor Degree
- Higher Diploma
- Postgraduate Diploma
- Masters Degree
- Doctoral degree

A degree programme will be eligible for inclusion in the internationalisation register when the award it leads to is made by one of the following types of *awarding body*:

- (i) A recognised Irish awarding body i.e.,
 - Dublin Institute of Technology
 - Higher Education and Training Awards Council
 - Institutes of Technology with delegated authority to make awards
 - Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
 - Universities
 - Other bodies that have statutory powers under Irish law to make awards

- (ii) A recognised awarding body from a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) jurisdiction, which is operating in Ireland. In such cases, the awards offered in Ireland must be verified by the relevant authority in the

⁴ New Immigration Regime for Full-Time Non-EEA Students (2010:10)

awarding body's home jurisdiction as being compatible with the completion of the first, second or third cycle, or an intermediate award in the second cycle of at least 60 ECTS or equivalent credits, of the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (the 'Bologna Framework') (see appendix 2 for Bologna Framework diagram)

- (iii) A recognised awarding body from a jurisdiction outside the EHEA, the awards of which are recognised in the home jurisdiction; are aligned with the Irish NFQ, and are deemed to mark completion of the first, second or third cycle, or an intermediate award in the second cycle of at least 60 ECTS or equivalent credits, of the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (the 'Bologna Framework')

Other conditions for eligibility for inclusion in the internationalisation register under the 'Degree Programme' category:

Any programme included in the register as satisfying the Degree Programme category, must have an associated workload of at least 60 ECTS credits per academic year and non-EEA students must be attending the programme on a full-time / daytime basis.

Timing of implementation of 'Degree Programme' category:

From 01 January 2011, no new applications for inclusion in the internationalisation register will be permitted for higher education and training programmes which do not meet the definition and interpretation set out above.

Any existing higher education and training programme on the internationalisation register which does not meet the definition and interpretation set out above will be removed from the register by 01 July 2011.

Students should refer to the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service with regard to registration requirements and the registration process. Details may be found at www.inis.gov.ie.

(b) Language and Non-Degree Programmes

Definition and interpretation: Non-Degree Programmes

For the purposes of the implementation of R1, *Non-Degree Programmes* which are eligible for inclusion in the internationalisation register are defined as follows:

A non-degree programme at levels 5 or 6 of the NFQ is a programme which leads to one of the following awards, or to an award that is deemed to be comparable:

- Level 5 Certificate
- Advanced Certificate
- Higher Certificate

A non-degree programme will be eligible for inclusion in the internationalisation register when the award it leads to is made by one of the following types of *awarding body*:

- (i) A recognised Irish awarding body i.e.,
 - Dublin Institute of Technology
 - Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC)
 - Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC)
 - Institutes of Technology with delegated authority to make awards
 - Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
 - Universities
 - Other bodies that have statutory powers under Irish law to make awards
- (ii) A recognised awarding body operating in Ireland from a jurisdiction that is participating in the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF). In such cases, the awards offered in Ireland must be at levels in the national qualifications framework or qualifications system of the home jurisdiction that have been formally referenced to EQF Level 4 or 5 by the relevant authorities (see appendix 3 for EQF diagram)
- (iii) A recognised awarding body from a jurisdiction which is not participating in the EQF, the awards of which are formally recognised in the home jurisdiction and are aligned with the Irish NFQ at levels 5 or 6.

Other conditions for eligibility for inclusion in the internationalisation register under the 'Non-Degree Programme' category:

A Non-Degree programme will be deemed to meet the duration criterion if the programme is of at least one year's duration and students attend on a full-time / day-

time basis; if formal timetabled hours for student contact amount to at least 15 hours per week; if the course operates for at least 25 weeks over the year; and if the tuition element constitutes at least 250 hours during that period.

Timing of implementation of the recommendation on *Non-Degree Programmes*:

From 01 January 2011, no new applications for inclusion on the internationalisation register will be permitted for non-degree programmes which do not meet the definition and interpretation set out above.

Any non-degree programme which does not meet the definition and interpretation set out above will be removed from the register by 01 July 2011.

Students should refer to the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service with regard to registration requirements and the registration process. Details may be found at www.inis.gov.ie.

Definition and interpretation: Language Programmes

For the purposes of the implementation of R1, *Language Programmes* which are eligible for inclusion in the internationalisation register will be made by one of the awarding bodies described below and/or will be recognised by the Accreditation Council for English Language Schools (ACELS).

A Language Programme will be eligible for inclusion in the internationalisation register when the award it leads to is made by one of the following types of *awarding body*:

- (i) A recognised Irish awarding body i.e.,
 - Dublin Institute of Technology
 - Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC)
 - Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC)
 - Institutes of Technology with delegated authority
 - Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
 - Universities
 - Other bodies that have statutory powers under Irish law to make awards

- (ii) A recognised awarding body operating in Ireland from a jurisdiction that is participating in the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF). In such cases the awards offered in Ireland must be at levels in the national qualifications framework or qualifications system of the home jurisdiction that have been formally referenced by the relevant authorities to EQF Level 5 or below (see appendix 3 for EQF diagram)

- (iii) A recognised awarding body from a jurisdiction which is not participating in the EQF, the awards of which are recognised in the home jurisdiction and are aligned with the Irish NFQ at level 6 or below.

Also eligible for inclusion in the Internationalisation Register are English language programmes operating in centres which have been approved by the ACELS quality assurance/inspection scheme, which are recognised by the Minister for Education and Skills and which provide student assessment and certification at the end of the programme through any of the following examinations in the language sector:

- Cambridge English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS)
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
- Test of Interactive English (TIE)
- English Test for Academic and Professional Purposes (ETAPP)
- Pearson Academic (PA)
- Pearson General (PG)

Other conditions for eligibility for inclusion in the internationalisation register under the 'Language Programme' category:

A Language Programme will be deemed to meet the duration criterion if the programme is of at least one year's duration and students attend on a full-time / day-time basis; if formal timetabled hours for student contact amount to at least 15 hours per week; if the course operates for at least 25 weeks over the year; and if the tuition element constitutes at least 250 hours during that period.

Timing of implementation of the recommendation on Language programmes:

From 01 January 2011, no new application for inclusion in the internationalisation register will be permitted for language programmes which do not meet the definition and interpretation set out above.

Any language programme which does not meet the definition and interpretation set out above will be removed from the register by 01 July 2011.

Students should refer to the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service with regard to registration requirements and the registration process. Details may be found at www.inis.gov.ie.

2. EU/EEA countries

The Members of the European Economic Area are Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

The EU countries are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

This information note applies to programmes catering for students who are citizens from countries other than those listed above or Switzerland.

3. Evidence of accreditation

Providers seeking inclusion of programmes on the internationalisation register must attach a copy of recent documentation from the relevant awarding body demonstrating that the programme concerned, at the time of application, leads to an award of an awarding body which satisfies the descriptions provided in section 1 of this document. Information regarding the programme submitted by the provider, for instance regarding programme duration and any conditions concerning the duration of agreements with an awarding body, will be confirmed by the NQAI with the awarding body where considered necessary.

4. Quality Assurance / Inspection

In certain cases, additional documentation may be sought on the quality assurance procedures operated by providers and their relationship with the relevant awarding body in order to process any request for inclusion of programmes on the register. The right is also reserved to carry out inspections and spot checks of any programme included on the register.

5. Applications

Applications forms for inclusion on the Internationalisation Register are available on the website of the NQAI. The Internationalisation Register will continue to be updated on a monthly basis. Contact / submission details are as follows:

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
Internationalisation Register Applications
5th Floor, Jervis House
Jervis Street
Dublin 1

Telephone: 01 8871500

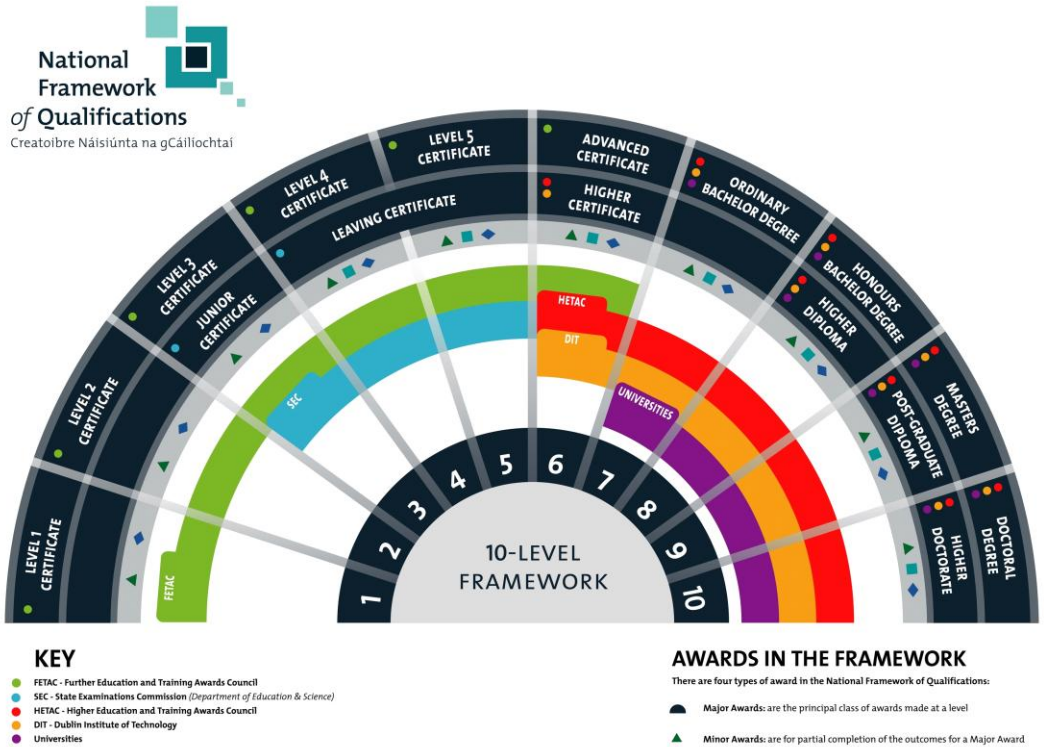
Email: info@intreg.ie

Website: www.nqai.ie

6. Notification of decisions regarding inclusion on the register

Applicants will be notified by the NQAI of any decision regarding the inclusion of their programmes on the Internationalisation Register. Every effort will be made to process applications as quickly as possible. The register is published on www.nqai.ie.

Appendix 1: National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) 'Fan Diagram'



Appendix 2: Verification of NFQ higher education awards with the three cycles of the ‘Bologna Framework’

<i>EHEA Framework (‘Bologna Framework’)</i>	<i>NFQ Levels</i>	<i>NFQ Major Award-types</i>
First Cycle	7	Ordinary Bachelor Degree
	8	Honours Bachelor Degree, Higher Diploma
Second Cycle	9	Post-Graduate Diploma* Masters Degree
Third cycle	10	Doctoral Degree, Higher Doctorate

*Verified as an intermediate award in the second cycle of the Bologna Framework

Appendix 3: Referencing of NFQ Levels to Levels of European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

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