

**National Framework of Qualifications**

**Level Indicators and Award-type Descriptors -  
Major Awards at Levels 6 – 9 on the NFQ**

	<i>Level 1</i>	<i>Level 2</i>	<i>Level 3</i>	<i>Level 4</i>	<i>Level 5</i>	<i>Level 6</i>	<i>Level 7</i>	<i>Level 8</i>	<i>Level 9</i>	<i>Level 10</i>
<b>Knowledge - Breadth</b>	Elementary knowledge	Knowledge that is narrow in range	Knowledge moderately broad in range	Broad range of knowledge	Broad range of knowledge	Specialised knowledge of a broad area	Specialised knowledge across a variety of areas	An understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to a field (or fields) of learning	A systematic understanding of knowledge, at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning	A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of a field of learning
<b>Knowledge - Kind</b>	Demonstrable by recognition or recall	Concrete in reference and basic in comprehension	Mainly concrete in reference and with some comprehension of relationship between knowledge elements	Mainly concrete in reference and with some elements of abstraction or theory	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant depth in some areas	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant underpinning theory	Recognition of limitations of current knowledge and familiarity with sources of new knowledge; integration of concepts across a variety of areas	Detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialised areas, some of it at the current boundaries of the field(s)	A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning	The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy review by peers
<b>Know-how and skill - Range</b>	Demonstrate basic practical skills, and carry out directed activity using basic tools	Demonstrate a limited range of basic practical skills, including the use of relevant tools	Demonstrate a limited range of practical and cognitive skills and tools	Demonstrate a moderate range of practical and cognitive skills and tools	Demonstrate a broad range of specialised skills and tools	Demonstrate a comprehensive range of specialised skills and tools	Demonstrate specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills and tools across an area of study	Demonstrate mastery of a complex and specialised area of skills and tools; use and modify advanced skills and tools to conduct closely guided research, professional or advanced technical activity	Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools and techniques of enquiry	Demonstrate a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials which are associated with a field of learning; develop new skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials
<b>Know-how and skill - Selectivity</b>	Perform processes that are repetitive and predictable	Perform a sequence of routine tasks given clear direction	Select from a limited range of varied procedures and apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems	Select from a range of procedures and apply known solutions to a variety of predictable problems	Evaluate and use information to plan and develop investigative strategies and to determine solutions to varied unfamiliar problems	Formulate responses to well-defined abstract problems	Exercise appropriate judgement in planning design, technical and/or supervisory functions related to products, services, operations or processes	Exercise appropriate judgement in a number of complex planning, design, technical and/or management functions related to products, services, operations or processes, including resourcing	Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning; develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques	Respond to abstract problems that expand and redefine existing procedural knowledge
<b>Competence - Context</b>	Act in closely defined and highly structured contexts	Act in a limited range of predictable and structured contexts	Act within a limited range of contexts	Act in familiar and unfamiliar contexts	Act in a range of varied and specific contexts, taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs; identify and apply skill and knowledge to a wide variety of contexts	Act in a range of varied and specific contexts involving creative and non-routine activities; transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of contexts	Utilise diagnostic and creative skills in a range of functions in a wide variety of contexts	Use advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for all related decision making; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills in a range of contexts	Act in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional levels and ill defined contexts	Exercise personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent contexts
<b>Competence - Role</b>	Act in a limited range of roles	Act in a range of roles under direction	Act under direction with limited autonomy; function within familiar, homogeneous groups	Act with considerable amount of responsibility and autonomy	Exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities; join and function within multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups	Exercise substantial personal autonomy and often take responsibility for the work of others and/or for the allocation of resources; form, and function within, multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups	Accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes; take significant or supervisory responsibility for the work of others in defined areas of work	Act effectively under guidance in a peer relationship with qualified practitioners; lead multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups	Take significant responsibility for the work of individuals and groups; lead and initiate activity	Communicate results of research and innovation to peers; engage in critical dialogue; lead and originate complex social processes

<b>Competence</b> – <i>Learning to Learn</i>	Learn to sequence learning tasks; learn to access and use a range of learning resources	Learn to learn in a disciplined manner in a well-structured and supervised environment	Learn to learn within a managed environment	Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a supervised environment	Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a managed environment	Learn to evaluate own learning and identify needs within a structured learning environment; assist others in identifying learning needs	Take initiative to identify and address learning needs and interact effectively in a learning group	Learn to act in variable and unfamiliar learning contexts; learn to manage learning tasks independently, professionally and ethically	Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development	Learn to critique the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts
<b>Competence</b> – <i>Insight</i>	Begin to demonstrate awareness of independent role for self	Demonstrate awareness of independent role for self	Assume limited responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour	Assume partial responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour	Assume full responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour	Express an internalised, personal world view, reflecting engagement with others	Express an internalised, personal world view, manifesting solidarity with others	Express a comprehensive, internalised, personal world view manifesting solidarity with others	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and act to change them	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and lead action to change them

## Award-type descriptor **h**

<b>Title</b>	Advanced Certificate
<b>Class of Award-type</b>	Major
<b>Purpose</b>	This is a multi-purpose award-type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
<b>Level</b>	6
<b>Volume</b>	Large
<b>Knowledge - breadth</b>	Specialised knowledge of a broad area
<b>Knowledge - kind</b>	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant depth in some areas
<b>Know-how and skill - range</b>	Demonstrate comprehensive range of specialised skills and tools
<b>Know-how and skill - selectivity</b>	Formulate responses to well-defined abstract problems
<b>Competence - context</b>	Utilise diagnostic and creative skills in a range of functions in a wide variety of contexts
<b>Competence - role</b>	Exercise substantial personal autonomy and often take responsibility for the work of others and/or for the allocation of resources; form, and function within, multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups
<b>Competence – learning to learn</b>	Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a managed environment
<b>Competence - insight</b>	Express an internalised, personal world view, reflecting engagement with others
<b>Progression &amp; Transfer</b>	Transfer to a programme leading to a Higher Certificate (award-type <b>i</b> ). Progression to a programme leading to an Ordinary Bachelor Degree (award-type <b>j</b> ) or to an Honours Bachelor Degree (award-type <b>k</b> ).
<b>Articulation</b>	

## Award-type descriptor **i**

<b>Title</b>	Higher Certificate
<b>Class of Award-type</b>	Major
<b>Purpose</b>	This is a multi-purpose award-type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
<b>Level</b>	6
<b>Volume</b>	Large
<b>Knowledge - breadth</b>	Specialised knowledge of a broad area
<b>Knowledge - kind</b>	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant underpinning theory
<b>Know-how and skill - range</b>	Demonstrate comprehensive range of specialised skills and tools
<b>Know-how and skill - selectivity</b>	Formulate responses to well-defined abstract problems
<b>Competence - context</b>	Act in a range of varied and specific contexts, taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs; identify and apply skill and knowledge to a wide variety of contexts
<b>Competence - role</b>	Exercise substantial personal autonomy and often take responsibility for the work of others and/or for the allocation of resources; form, and function within, multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups
<b>Competence – learning to learn</b>	Take initiative to identify and address learning needs and interact effectively in a learning group
<b>Competence - insight</b>	Express an internalised, personal world view, reflecting engagement with others
<b>Progression &amp; Transfer</b>	Transfer to programme leading to an Advanced Certificate (Award-type <b>h</b> ) Progression to a programme leading to an Ordinary Bachelor Degree (award-type <b>j</b> ) or to an Honours Bachelor Degree (award-type <b>k</b> ).
<b>Articulation</b>	

## Award-type descriptor **j**

<b>Title</b>	Ordinary Bachelor Degree
<b>Class of Award-type</b>	Major
<b>Purpose</b>	This is a multi-purpose award-type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
<b>Level</b>	7
<b>Volume</b>	Large
<b>Knowledge - breadth</b>	Specialised knowledge across a variety of areas
<b>Knowledge - kind</b>	Recognition of limitations of current knowledge and familiarity with sources of new knowledge; integration of concepts across a variety of areas
<b>Know-how and skill - range</b>	Demonstrate specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills and tools across an area of study
<b>Know-how and skill - selectivity</b>	Exercise appropriate judgement in planning, design, technical and/or supervisory functions related to products, services, operations or processes
<b>Competence - context</b>	Utilise diagnostic and creative skills in a range of functions in a wide variety of contexts
<b>Competence - role</b>	Accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes; take significant or supervisory responsibility for the work of others in defined areas of work
<b>Competence – learning to learn</b>	Take initiative to identify and address learning needs and interact effectively in a learning group
<b>Competence - insight</b>	Express an internalised, personal world view, manifesting solidarity with others
<b>Progression &amp; Transfer</b>	Progression to programme leading to an Honours Bachelor Degree (Award-type <b>k</b> ) or to a Higher Diploma (Award-type <b>l</b> ) Progression internationally to some second cycle (i.e. " Bologna masters") degree programmes.
<b>Articulation</b>	

## Award-type descriptor **k**

<b>Title</b>	Honours Bachelor Degree
<b>Class of Award-type</b>	Major
<b>Purpose</b>	This is a multi-purpose award-type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
<b>Level</b>	8
<b>Volume</b>	Large
<b>Knowledge - breadth</b>	An understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to a field (or fields) of learning
<b>Knowledge - kind</b>	Detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialised areas, some of it at the current boundaries of the field(s)
<b>Know-how and skill - range</b>	Demonstrate mastery of a complex and specialised area of skills and tools; use and modify advanced skills and tools to conduct closely guided research, professional or advanced technical activity
<b>Know-how and skill - selectivity</b>	Exercise appropriate judgement in a number of complex planning, design, technical and/or management functions related to products, services, operations or processes, including resourcing
<b>Competence - context</b>	Use advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for all related decision making; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills in a range of contexts
<b>Competence - role</b>	Act effectively under guidance in a peer relationship with qualified practitioners; lead multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups
<b>Competence – learning to learn</b>	Learn to act in variable and unfamiliar learning contexts; learn to manage learning tasks independently, professionally and ethically
<b>Competence - insight</b>	Express a comprehensive, internalised, personal world view manifesting solidarity with others
<b>Progression &amp; Transfer</b>	Transfer to programmes leading to Higher Diploma (Award-type <b>l</b> ). Progression to programmes leading to Masters Degree or Post-graduate Diploma (Award-types <b>m</b> or <b>n</b> ), or in some cases, to programmes leading to a Doctoral Degree (Award-type <b>o</b> ). Progression internationally to second cycle (i.e. "Bologna masters") degree programmes
<b>Articulation</b>	

## Award-type descriptor **I**

<b>Title</b>	Higher Diploma
<b>Class of Award-type</b>	Major
<b>Purpose</b>	This is a multi-purpose award-type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
<b>Level</b>	8
<b>Volume</b>	Medium
<b>Knowledge - breadth</b>	An understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to a field (or fields) of learning
<b>Knowledge - kind</b>	Detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialised areas, some of it at the current boundaries of the field
<b>Know-how and skill - range</b>	Demonstrate mastery of a complex and specialised area of skills and tools; use and modify advanced skills and tools to conduct closely guided research, professional or advanced technical activity
<b>Know-how and skill - selectivity</b>	Exercise appropriate judgement in a number of complex planning, design, technical and/or management functions related to products, services, operations or processes, including resourcing
<b>Competence - context</b>	Use advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for all related decision making; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills in a range of contexts
<b>Competence - role</b>	Act effectively under guidance in a peer relationship with qualified practitioners; lead multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups
<b>Competence – learning to learn</b>	Learn to act in variable and unfamiliar learning contexts; learn to manage learning tasks independently, professionally and ethically
<b>Competence - insight</b>	Express a comprehensive, internalised, personal world view manifesting solidarity with others
<b>Progression &amp; Transfer</b>	Progression to programmes leading to Masters Degree or Post-graduate Diploma (Award-types <b>m</b> or <b>n</b> )
<b>Articulation</b>	From an Ordinary Bachelor Degree (Award-type <b>j</b> ), or from an Honours Bachelor Degree (Award-type <b>k</b> ), into a new field of learning

Award-type descriptor **m**

<b>Title</b>	Masters Degree
<b>Class of Award-type</b>	Major
<b>Purpose</b>	This is a multi-purpose award-type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
<b>Level</b>	9
<b>Volume</b>	Large
<b>Knowledge - breadth</b>	A systematic understanding of knowledge at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning
<b>Knowledge - kind</b>	A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning
<b>Know-how and skill - range</b>	Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools and techniques of enquiry
<b>Know-how and skill - selectivity</b>	Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning; develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques
<b>Competence - context</b>	Act in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional levels and ill defined contexts
<b>Competence - role</b>	Take significant responsibility for the work of individuals and groups; lead and initiate activity
<b>Competence – learning to learn</b>	Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development
<b>Competence - insight</b>	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and act to change them
<b>Progression &amp; Transfer</b>	Progression to programmes leading to Doctoral Degree (Award-type <b>o</b> ), or to another Masters Degree or to a Post-graduate Diploma (Award-types <b>m</b> or <b>n</b> ).
<b>Articulation</b>	

## Award-type descriptor **n**

<b>Title</b>	Post-graduate Diploma
<b>Class of Award-type</b>	Major
<b>Purpose</b>	This is a multi-purpose award-type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
<b>Level</b>	9
<b>Volume</b>	Medium
<b>Knowledge - breadth</b>	A systematic understanding of knowledge, at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning
<b>Knowledge - kind</b>	A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning
<b>Know-how and skill - range</b>	Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools and techniques of enquiry
<b>Know-how and skill - selectivity</b>	Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning; develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques
<b>Competence - context</b>	Act in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional levels and ill defined contexts
<b>Competence - role</b>	Take significant responsibility for the work of individuals and groups; lead and initiate activity
<b>Competence – learning to learn</b>	Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development
<b>Competence - insight</b>	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and act to change them
<b>Progression &amp; Transfer</b>	May exempt from part of the programme leading to a Masters Degree (Award-type <b>m</b> )
<b>Articulation</b>	

## Award-type descriptor 0

<b>Title</b>	Doctoral Degree
<b>Class of award-type</b>	Major
<b>Purpose</b>	This is a multi-purpose award-type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
<b>Level</b>	10
<b>Volume</b>	Large
<b>Knowledge - breadth</b>	A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of a field of learning
<b>Knowledge - kind</b>	The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy review by peers
<b>Know-how and skill - range</b>	Demonstrate a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials which are associated with a field of learning; develop new skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials
<b>Know-how and skill - selectivity</b>	Respond to abstract problems that expand and redefine existing procedural knowledge
<b>Competence - context</b>	Exercise personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent contexts
<b>Competence - role</b>	Communicate results of research and innovation to peers; engage in critical dialogue; lead and originate complex social processes
<b>Competence – learning to learn</b>	Learn to critique the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts
<b>Competence - insight</b>	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and lead action to change them
<b>Progression &amp; Transfer</b>	
<b>Articulation</b>	

## Major Award-type Descriptor **p**

<b>Title</b>	Higher Doctorate
<b>Purpose</b>	This award is largely recognises excellent and distinguished contributions to learning. It may be used for career progression to advanced levels of academia and research.
<b>Level</b>	10
<b>Volume</b>	Large
<b>Knowledge - breadth</b>	The systematic development of a large and coherent body of knowledge which is at the forefront of a field of learning
<b>Knowledge – kind</b>	The creation and interpretation of seminal knowledge, through original research, or other advanced creative scholarship that is of a quality to satisfy review by peers
<b>Know-how and skill – range</b>	Bring to publication the output of scholarly work in the production or application of knowledge in a form that admits to scholarly assessment
<b>Know-how and skill - selectivity</b>	Respond to abstract problems that expand and redefine existing procedural knowledge
<b>Competence - context</b>	Make a substantial and sustained contribution to the application of knowledge and skill, perhaps in novel contexts
<b>Competence – role</b>	Acts as a recognised leading authority, influencing others in a field of learning over a period of time
<b>Competence – learning to learn</b>	Learn to critique the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts
<b>Competence - insight</b>	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and lead action to change them
<b>Progression &amp; Transfer</b>	None
<b>Articulation</b>	This award is never based on a provider's programme and, as such, is not subject to validation but is assessed by the awarding body for each individual learner. Normally, the learner already holds a first doctorate or equivalent for some period of time prior to becoming a candidate for the higher doctorate