

**Report on the alignment of the MSc Professional Hospitality and Tourism Management award made by University College Birmingham in Ireland with the National Framework of Qualifications  
– May 2009**

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**Recommendation**

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland recommends that the MSc Professional Hospitality and Tourism Management award made by the University of Birmingham on successful completion of the associated programme provided by University College Birmingham (UCB), which will be made in Ireland, should be aligned with the Masters Degree award-type which is placed at Level 9 on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications. Further detail regarding the alignment and the structure of the UCB award is included in Appendix 1.

**Conditions of Alignment**

1. UCB may refer to the MSc Professional Hospitality and Tourism Management award as being aligned with the Masters Degree which is placed at Level 9 on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and recognised as such by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI).
2. The specified award and not the component parts are aligned with the NFQ.
3. UCB shall provide the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) with annual statistics in respect of numbers achieving the award to which the alignment applies and numbers registering for higher education modules which may lead to this award, on agreed dates.
4. UCB shall advise the NQAI of any external quality assurance review to which it is subject, including the quality institutional audit, collaborative provision and overseas audits. It shall also advise the NQAI of the outcome of such audits.
5. UCB shall advise the NQAI of any material change to its Quality Assurance Procedures, which will impact on any aspect of the provision of the awards to which the alignment applies.
6. UCB shall implement the procedures determined by the NQAI in respect of access, transfer and progression and RPL.
7. UCB shall advise the NQAI of any new awards which are approved for provision in Ireland.

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## **Introduction**

University College Birmingham applied to the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (the NQAI) to have the MSc Professional Hospitality and Tourism Management award that it will make in Ireland aligned with the National Framework of Qualifications (the NFQ). This alignment is enabled through the Policies and Criteria for the inclusion in, or alignment with, the National Framework of Qualifications (Framework) of the awards of certain awarding bodies which were adopted by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland in July 2006 (*Policies and Criteria for the Inclusion in, or Alignment with, the National Framework of Qualifications of the Awards of Certain Awarding Bodies*). These policies are designed to enable the recognition of awards, or learning outcomes associated with awards, of certain awarding bodies which are not already recognised through the Framework. In its policy, three different types of bodies to which the policy applies are identified. These are:

- a. Irish bodies which make awards on a statutory basis where the awards are not yet in the Framework and where the awards cannot be withdrawn;
- b. 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;
- c. Certain bodies from outside the state which make awards in Ireland.

Inclusion in and alignment with the NFQ of awards and learning outcomes of these bodies can be through Framework award-types and their descriptors, or at a level in the Framework on an overall best-fit basis. Awards which may be considered for recognition through the Framework must have quality assurance procedures relating to the award and also relating to programmes leading to the awards.

### *International Awards*

International Awards, or Group C awards, as identified in the policy are defined as awards made by national awarding bodies from other jurisdictions 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. Awards which fall within this category can be aligned with the Framework. The alignment of the awards of UK bodies will be undertaken in the context of the cross-referencing of the Irish Framework with UK Frameworks updated in conjunction with UK regulatory authorities in 2009 (*Qualifications can cross boundaries – a rough guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland*).

Under the policy, the applicant body under category C applies to the NQAI for alignment of the relevant awards.

## **University College Birmingham (UCB)**

The Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies signed an accreditation agreement with the University of Birmingham in 1996, making the Birmingham College of

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Food, Tourism and Creative Studies an accredited college of the University. In 2007, the Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies was renamed University College Birmingham. Under the accreditation agreement, many of the programmes offered by UCB, including the MSc in Professional Hospitality and Tourism Management to which this alignment application applies, lead to an award of the University of Birmingham. University of Birmingham indicated that it wished to apply to have the MSc in Professional Hospitality and Tourism Management aligned with the Irish NFQ. The university also indicated that it wished UCB to proceed with the application on its behalf.

Degree awarding powers were granted to UCB in 2007. However, degrees are still awarded by University of Birmingham under the terms of its accreditation agreement with UCB.

The MSc programme which will be delivered in Ireland meets the requirements of the UK Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and is subject to scrutiny by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). The Quality Assurance Framework provides for external quality assurance of provision through its Code of Practice and through review by QAA's mainstream review process. The QAA is a member of the European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies and has committed itself and the institutions within its review remit to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. HETAC has a Memorandum of Understanding in place with the QAA that provides for the exchange of information in relation to UK universities that make awards to learners in Ireland.

### **Application**

UCB has applied to have one award aligned with the NFQ, namely the MSc in Professional Hospitality and Tourism Management. The MSc award is placed at Level 7 on the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ).

### **QAA**

The procedures for the alignment of the awards of awarding bodies from outside the state, which make awards in Ireland, requires consultation with the quality assurance agency which is primarily responsible for the quality assurance within the applicant body. QAA has confirmed that it quality assures the provision of UCB and University of Birmingham. The Academic Infrastructure is the means of describing academic standards in UK higher education, the institutional audit is central to the review process. An institutional audit of UCB was last conducted in 2006. The audit team's view was that:

- broad confidence can be placed in the soundness of the College's current and likely future management of the quality of its programmes

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- the findings of the audit suggest that there can be broad confidence in the College's current and likely future management of the academic standards of its programmes.

(The report is available at  
<http://www.qaa.org.uk/reviews/reports/instReports.asp?ukprn=10000712>)

An institutional audit of University of Birmingham was last conducted in 2004.  
The audit team's view was that:

- broad confidence can be placed in the soundness of the current management of the quality of its programmes; and
- broad confidence can be placed in the institutional-level capacity to manage effectively the security of its awards.

(The report is available at  
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/reports/institutional/Birmingham04/summary.asp>)

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**Appendix 1**

**Alignment of the UCB award with the National Framework of Qualifications**

<b>UCB Award</b>	<b>Level on FHEQ for England, Wales and Northern Ireland</b>	<b>UK Credits</b>	<b>Irish NFQ Level</b>	<b>Irish NFQ Award-Type</b>	<b>ECTS Credits</b>
MSc in Professional Hospitality and Tourism Management	Masters Degree Level 7	180 (240 if optional placement undertaken)	Level 9	Masters Degree	90 (120 if optional placement undertaken)

**Structure of UCB award in terms of Level and Credit**

The programme leading to the MSc in Professional Hospitality and Tourism Management consists of 6 modules, an optional placement plus a dissertation. All modules total 20 UK credits\* at FHEQ Level 7 (Masters). The dissertation and optional placement are 60 UK credits\* each, also at FHEQ Level 7(Masters). Total UK credit for the programme is 180 (240 UK credits if the optional placement is undertaken). The ECTS credit value for the programme is 90 ECTS, 120 ECTS if the optional placement is undertaken.

\* UK Credits are double ECTS e.g. 120 UK credits equal 60 ECTS.