

How to use this leaflet:

This leaflet provides information that allows you to look at the ways qualifications are organised in Ireland and the UK. On one side of the table you will find the main stages of education or employment - you can find where you are in these stages. The next column shows the qualifications framework for your country. To the right of this you can see the nearest levels and similar kinds of qualifications that are used in the other countries. This makes it possible to draw broad comparisons between qualifications and their levels, rather than direct equivalences, for each country.

Qualifications are different in different countries. However, they are remarkably similar in what they tell someone about the person who has achieved them, for example that he or she is ready for a college/higher education course, or for a first skilled job. There are some clear stages people move through in education, training and work that are common to most countries. Primary education is followed by secondary education and initial entry into employment and/or further and higher education or training. Some people move on to more skilled employment. Some choose to go into higher education and many take part in specialist training in their work place. People graduating from a higher education institution may enter employment and those who complete professional or postgraduate education may also enter employment.

The table gives an indication of how you can compare qualifications across national boundaries. Examples of major qualifications at each level are provided. For more detail of the qualifications in another country, you will need to consult the website given at the head of each column. All these frameworks of qualifications change from time to time and you need to check these websites for the latest versions. Entry requirements for jobs and courses often vary within a country. This means you will need to check specific requirements with the employer or institution for the job or course that you are interested in.

This leaflet is designed to give some information to help you begin this process, for example, by telling you what your qualification or qualifications you are interested in studying, are broadly comparable to in other countries.

Thinking of working or studying in Ireland or the UK? You may be interested in the answer to one or more of these questions.

- What do they call the qualification which matches mine most closely?
- Will my qualification get me into college or a job?
- Will I get some recognition for the qualifications I have?
- What kind of job or course can I apply for with my current qualification?

Recruiting people with Irish qualifications in the UK or people with UK qualifications in Ireland? You may be interested in the answer to these questions.

- How do I know what a qualification from another country means in terms of level?
- Which national qualification should I compare this qualification to?
- Where can I find more detailed information about the content and level of qualifications?

This leaflet helps you explore these questions.



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Qualifications can cross boundaries – a rough guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland



Main stages of education / employment

National Framework of Qualifications for Ireland
www.nfq.ie

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
www.scqf.org.uk

National Qualifications Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland*
www.qca.org.uk/qualifications
www.wales.gov.uk, www.ccea.org.uk
www.qca.org.uk/openquals

Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales
www.cqfw.net

Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/fheq

LEVEL

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Professional or postgraduate education, research or employment

Higher education
Advanced skills training

Entry to professional graduate employment

Specialised education and training

Qualified/Skilled worker
Entry to higher education
Completion of secondary education

Progression to skilled employment.
Continuation of secondary education.

Secondary education Initial entry into employment or further education

Qualifications can be taken at any age in order to continue or return to education or training

10 Doctoral Degree, Higher Doctorate

9 Master's Degree, Post-graduate Diploma

8 Honours Bachelor Degree, Higher Diploma

7 Ordinary Bachelor Degree

6 Advanced Certificate, Higher Certificate

5 Level 5 Certificate, Leaving Certificate

4 Level 4 Certificate, Leaving Certificate

3 Level 3 Certificate, Junior Certificate

2 Level 2 Certificate

1 Level 1 Certificate

12 Professional Development Awards, Doctoral Degrees

11 SVQ Level 5, Professional Development Awards, Postgraduate Diplomas, Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Certificates,

10 Bachelor's Degrees with Honours, Professional Development Awards, Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates

9 Bachelor's/Ordinary Degrees, Professional Development Awards, SVQ Level 4, Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates

8 Higher National Diplomas, SVQ Level 4, Professional Development Awards, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE)

7 Professional Development Awards, Higher National Certificates (HNC), Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE) SVQ Level 3, Advanced Highers,

6 Highers, SVQ Level 3, Professional Development Awards, National Progression Awards, National Certificates

5 Intermediate 2, Credit Standard Grade, SVQ 2, National Progression Awards, National Certificates

4 Intermediate 1, General Standard Grade, Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) 1, National Progression Awards, National Certificates

3 Access 3, Foundation Standard Grades, National Progression Awards, National Certificates

2 Access 2, National Progression Awards, National Certificates

1 Access 1

8 Vocational Qualifications Level 8

7 Fellowships, NVQ Level 5, Vocational Qualifications Level 7

6 Vocational Qualifications Level 6

5 NVQ Level 4, Higher National Diplomas (HND), Higher National Certificates (HNC), Vocational Qualifications Level 5

4 Vocational Qualifications Level 4

3 NVQ Level 3, Vocational Qualifications Level 3, GCE AS and A Level, Advanced Diplomas

2 NVQ Level 2, Vocational Qualifications Level 2, GCSEs at grade A*–C, ESOL skills for life, Higher Diplomas, functional skills Level 2 (English, mathematics & ICT)

1 NVQ Level 1, Vocational Qualifications Level 1, GCSEs at grade D–G, ESOL skills for life, Foundation Diplomas, functional skills Level 1 (English, mathematics & ICT)

Entry Level
Entry Level Certificates (sub levels 1–3), ESOL skills for life, functional skills Entry Level (English, mathematics & ICT)

8 Doctoral Degrees

7 Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Postgraduate Certificates

6 Bachelor's Degrees with Honours, Bachelor's Degrees, Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates

5 Foundation Degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diplomas (HND)

4 Higher National Certificates (HNC), Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE)

3 NVQ Level 3, Vocational Qualifications Level 3, GCE AS and A Level, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Advanced

2 NVQ Level 2, Vocational Qualifications Level 2, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Intermediate, GCSEs grade A*–C

1 NVQ Level 1, Vocational Qualifications Level 1, GCSEs at grade D–G, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Foundation

Entry Level
Entry Level Certificate (sub levels 1–3)

8 Doctoral Degrees

7 Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Postgraduate Certificates

6 Bachelor's Degrees with Honours, Bachelor's Degrees, Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates

5 Foundation Degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diplomas (HND)

4 Higher National Certificates (HNC), Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE)

The table gives an indication of how you can compare qualifications across national boundaries. Examples of major qualifications at each level are provided. For more detail of the qualifications in another country, you will need to consult the website given at the head of each column.

This leaflet is designed to give some information to help you begin this process, for example, by telling you what your qualification, or qualifications you are interested in studying, are broadly comparable to in other countries.

Qualifications can cross boundaries
– a rough guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland. March 2009.



* These levels will also apply to the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). The QCF will eventually replace the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).