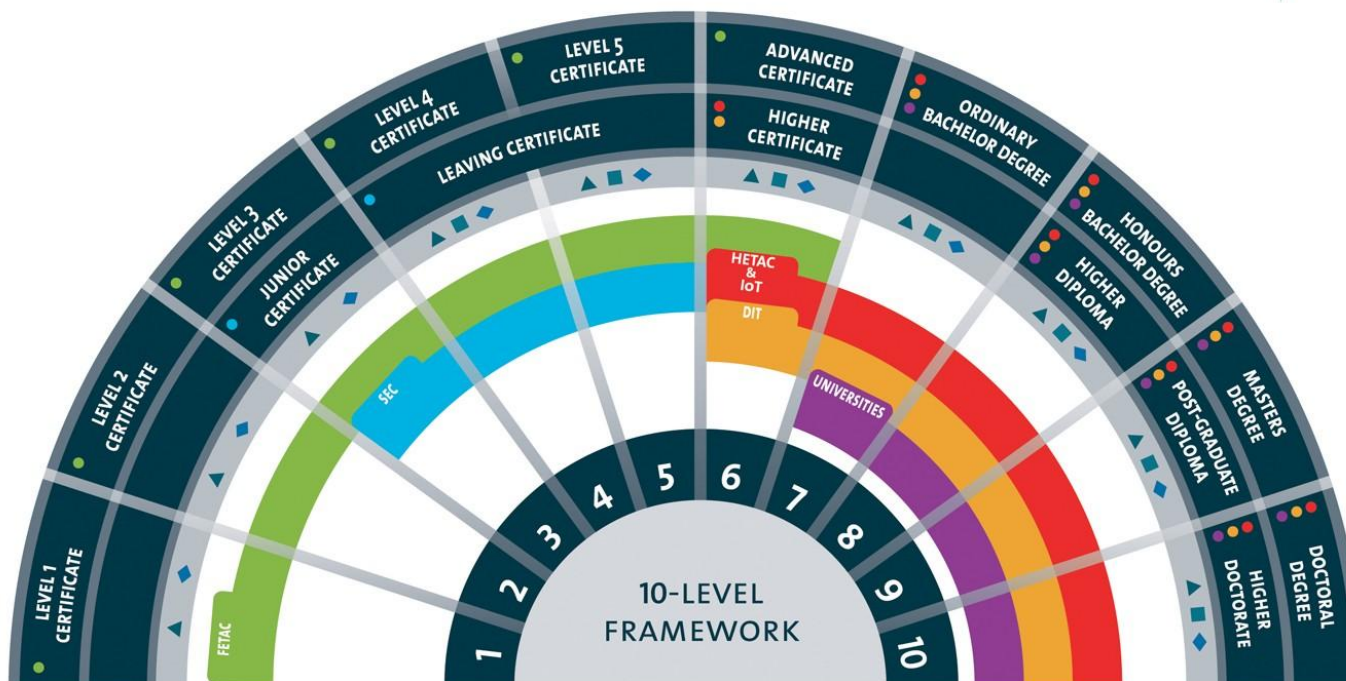


NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS

Údarás Náisiúnta
Cáilíochtaí na hÉireann
National Qualifications
Authority of Ireland



AWARDING BODIES

- FETAC - Further Education and Training Awards Council
- SEC - State Examinations Commission (Department of Education & Science)
- HETAC - Higher Education and Training Awards Council
- IOT - Institutes of Technology (make their own awards at specified levels under Delegated Authority from HETAC)
- DIT - Dublin Institute of Technology
- Universities

AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK

There are four types of award in the National Framework of Qualifications:

- Major Awards: are the principal class of awards made at a level
- ▲ Minor Awards: are for partial completion of the outcomes for a Major Award
- Supplemental Awards: are for learning that is additional to a Major Award
- ◆ Special Purpose Awards: are for relatively narrow or purpose-specific achievement

The National Framework of Qualifications

The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) is intended to put you, the learner, at the centre of the education and training system in Ireland. The NFQ is used to classify and compare qualifications. This means that you can use the NFQ to find out more about courses that you are interested in and to help you to make informed decisions when choosing a course. The NFQ also makes it easier for you to explain to others what qualifications you hold, or are studying for. This becomes very important when you are considering further learning or when you are applying for a job - at home or abroad.

The NFQ, illustrated by the “fan diagram” overleaf, is a system of ten levels. Each level tells you about the range of knowledge, skill and competence required to achieve a particular qualification. School qualifications (Junior and Leaving Certificates) awarded by the State Examinations Commission, further education and training qualifications awarded by FETAC, and higher education and training qualifications awarded by HETAC, Dublin Institute of Technology, other Institutes of Technology and the Universities are all included in the Framework.

Qualifications in the NFQ are quality assured. This means that you, the learner, can have confidence that your course, and the institution at which you are studying, are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Quality assurance is intended to ensure that all learners have a high quality learning experience regardless of where you are studying.

To get the most from your choices about education and training, it is worth asking the following questions:

- What qualification does a particular course lead to?
- Who is the awarding body?
- Does a course lead to a qualification that is included on the National Framework of Qualifications?
- What level is the qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications?
- What type of qualification (e.g., major, minor) is it?
- What are the options to progress further after completing it?

The European and international dimensions of the NFQ are also important. Increasingly, learners and workers are travelling to other countries to access further learning or employment. All qualifications in the NFQ are recognised at home and abroad. The NFQ is used to compare Irish qualifications with foreign qualifications, thus, acts as a valuable tool for Irish citizens travelling abroad who wish to use their Irish qualifications. In addition, learners or workers travelling to Ireland with qualifications gained abroad can use the NFQ to have these qualifications recognised. Visit www.qualrec.ie for more information.

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland is responsible for maintaining the NFQ (www.nfq.ie). Other areas of work include Qualifications Recognition (see above) and QualifaX, the National Learners' Database (www.QualifaX.ie).