

Comparing Qualifications in Ireland and Hong Kong

Making Connections for You

Introduction

Qualifications Frameworks in Ireland and Hong Kong

Using Qualifications Levels

Comparing Qualifications



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann



教育局
Education Bureau



資歷架構
Qualifications Framework

www.QQI.ie
www.hkqf.gov.hk

What Does This Mean For You?

Towards Mutual Recognition of Qualifications between Ireland and Hong Kong

The EDB and the QQI signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in September 2016 for the purpose of strengthening collaboration in the development of their qualifications frameworks, promoting mutual recognition of qualifications and facilitating the mobility of learners and employees between Ireland and Hong Kong.



MoU signing ceremony between QQI and EDB on 23 September 2016

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This guide explains the qualifications systems of Ireland and Hong Kong. Using qualifications frameworks, which have been developed in both countries, it helps students, employers and others to compare the main school, vocational and higher education qualifications achieved in Ireland and Hong Kong.

The Education Bureau (EDB) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is the bureau for formulating, developing and implementing the policies in respect of education from pre-primary to tertiary level as well as the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF).

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is responsible for the external quality assurance of post-secondary school education and training in Ireland and for promoting, developing and maintaining the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Since 2012, QQI hosts the Irish ENIC-NARIC and acts as the National Reference Point (NRP) within this European network for access to information on further education and training. In addition, it provides information and advice about the recognition of qualifications in Ireland and Irish qualifications abroad.

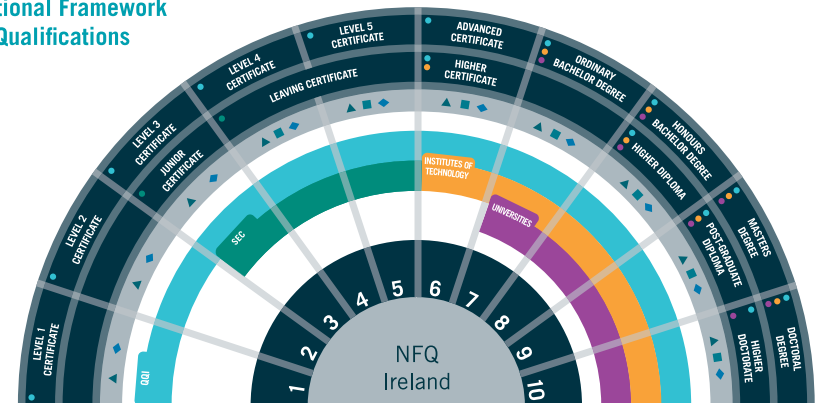
This guide is based on qualifications expertise and practice in both jurisdictions. Ireland and Hong Kong have invested much in making their respective qualifications systems trusted and transparent. The EDB and QQI are fully committed to the use of qualifications frameworks as a basis to support the mutual recognition of qualifications in Ireland and Hong Kong. Recognition bodies could use this user guide to facilitate recognition of Ireland or Hong Kong qualifications for student admission, employment and other purposes.



QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS

The Irish NFQ

Launched in 2003, the NFQ in Ireland is a comprehensive and learning-outcomes-based framework of 10 levels. Each level is based on nationally agreed standards of knowledge, skills and competence.



AWARDING BODIES

- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) makes awards in further and higher education and training
- SEC - State Examinations Commission (Department of Education and Skills)
- Institutes of Technology
- Universities

AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK

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

- Major Awards: named in the outer rings, 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



For further information consult: www.nfq.ie www.QQI.ie

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The HKQF

Launched in 2008, the HKQF is a unitary 7-level hierarchy covering all accredited learning in the academic, vocational, professional and continuing education sectors. It is a framework based on learning outcomes and underpinned by a robust quality assurance mechanism.



Qualifications Frameworks in Ireland and Hong Kong



QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEMS IN IRELAND AND HONG KONG

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is an overarching framework that links the qualifications systems of different countries. It covers qualifications at all levels. The main role of the EQF is to make qualifications more transparent and comparable across different countries and systems.

A level-to-level relationship has been established between the EQF and both the HKQF and the NFQ. Based on this shared relationship with the EQF, it is now possible to show how Irish qualifications compare to Hong Kong qualifications.

Level-to-level relationship between qualifications systems:

- Makes it easier to compare qualifications achieved in Ireland and Hong Kong
- Makes qualifications systems in Ireland and Hong Kong more transparent
- Supports efficient and fair recognition of qualifications in Ireland and Hong Kong
- Shows how Irish and Hong Kong qualifications relate to other qualifications frameworks such as the EQF.

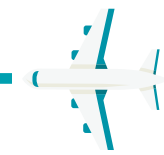
IRELAND



HONG KONG

Irish NFQ	EQF	HKQF
10	8	7
9	7	6
8	6	5
7		
6	5	4
5	4	3
4	3	2
3	2	1
2	1	No Match
1		

Using
Qualifications
Levels



COMPARING QUALIFICATIONS

Higher Education and Training Qualifications in Hong Kong

- The Associate Degree and Higher Diploma programmes at HKQF Level 4 in Hong Kong comprise two years of study which prepare students for further studies and initial employment at the para-professional level. They enable students to progress to senior year places in Bachelor Degree programmes.
- The Honours Bachelor Degree and Bachelor Degree at HKQF Level 5 are four-year undergraduate programmes. They offer progression to postgraduate programmes.
- The Postgraduate Diploma at HKQF Level 6 is a postgraduate qualification offered to the holders of Bachelor Degrees.
- The Masters Degree programme at HKQF Level 6 is a postgraduate qualification that is awarded following one or two years of study. There are two types of Masters Degree, namely a taught Masters Degree and a research Masters Degree. A Bachelor Degree is required for admission.
- A Doctoral Degree at HKQF Level 7 in Hong Kong involves original research and submission of a thesis.



Higher Education and Training Qualifications in Ireland

- The Higher Certificate at NFQ level 6 is awarded following one or two years of study. Entry to this programme is generally for secondary school graduates and those with equivalent qualifications. The Higher Certificate holders may progress to a programme on the next level on the Irish NFQ.
- The Ordinary Bachelor Degree at NFQ level 7 is typically awarded following three years of study. Holders of these qualifications do not generally access postgraduate study programmes immediately.
- The Irish Honours Bachelor Degree is awarded following three to four years of study. It offers progression to postgraduate study.
- The Higher Diploma at NFQ level 8 is normally awarded following one year of study. The typical entry requirement is an Honours Bachelor Degree.
- The Postgraduate Diploma at NFQ level 9 is awarded following one year of study. The typical entry requirement is a Bachelor Degree.
- There are two types of Masters Degrees at NFQ level 9 in Ireland: taught Masters Degrees awarded following one or two years of study and research Masters Degrees generally awarded following two years of study. The typical entry requirement is an Honours Bachelor Degree.
- Doctoral Degrees at NFQ level 10 are awarded following two to four years of study. Entry requirements vary among institutions. The typical requirement is an Honours Bachelor Degree or a Masters Degree.



Comparison of Higher Education and Training Qualifications

High Education and Training Qualifications in Ireland	NFQ Level	EQF	HKQF Level	High Education and Training Qualifications in Hong Kong
Higher Doctorate	10	8	7	Doctoral Degree
Doctoral Degree				
Masters Degree	9	7	6	Masters Degree
Postgraduate Diploma				Postgraduate Diploma
Honours Bachelor Degree	8	6	5	Bachelor Degree
Higher Diploma				
Ordinary Bachelor Degree	7			
Higher Certificate	6	5	4	Associate Degree

School Qualifications in Ireland

- The Junior Certificate is awarded to students who have successfully completed compulsory lower secondary education. The Junior Certificate at NFQ level 3 provides access to the Irish Leaving Certificate and to further education and training opportunities in Ireland.
- The Irish Leaving Certificate is awarded following successful completion of upper secondary school education. It is placed across levels 4 and 5 of the NFQ. Graduates can progress to further and higher education and training programmes or into employment.

School Qualifications in Hong Kong

On completion of Secondary 3 graduates can progress to upper secondary education leading to the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE). Students who complete Secondary 3 may also opt to pursue pre-employment Vocational and Professional Education and Training, e.g. Diploma in Vocational Education at HKQF Level 2.

The Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE), which replaced the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) in 2012, is the final exam in the Hong Kong secondary school system taken upon completion of a six-year secondary education.

HKDSE is the key general education qualification accepted as the entry qualification to post-secondary education such as Bachelor Degree, Associate Degree and Higher Diploma, or to further education and training in Hong Kong.

HKCEE was a school leaving qualification for those who completed a five-year secondary education before 2012.

Comparison of School Qualifications

School Qualifications in Ireland	NFQ Level	EQF	HKQF Level	School Qualifications in Hong Kong
Leaving Certificate	5	4	3	Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE)
	4	3	2	Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE)
Junior Certificate	3	2	1	Completion of Secondary 3



Vocational and Professional Education Training (VPET) Qualifications in Hong Kong

In Hong Kong, Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET) is offered at senior secondary and post-secondary levels.

- Certificate programmes and the Diploma of Vocational Education at HKQF level 2 and 3 respectively equip secondary 3 graduates with a range of industry-specific knowledge and skills for the purpose of taking up employment or accessing higher education and training.
- The Diploma of Foundation Studies at HKQF Level 3 enables secondary 6 school graduates to achieve both the basic skills required for developing a career in the industry, and a sound academic foundation for further studies.
- The Diploma Yi Jin at HKQF Level 3 provides an alternative pathway to secondary 6 school graduates and adult learners to obtain a formal qualification for employment and further study.
- The Higher Diploma at HKQF Level 4 prepares secondary 6 school graduates for initial employment at the para-professional level and enables them to pursue a career in a specific field. It is typically awarded following completion of a two-year programme. This qualification may allow advanced entry to Bachelor Degree programmes, at the discretion of institutions.



Vocational Education and Training (VET) Qualifications in Ireland

- NFQ Level 1 and 2 Certificates are designed to meet the needs of learners with few or no qualifications. Each certificate comprises a number of components which learners can achieve at their own pace.
- The NFQ Level 3 Certificate enables learners to gain recognition for specific skills, knowledge and achievements, allowing progression to the next level on the Irish NFQ.
- The NFQ Level 4 Certificate enables learners to gain recognition for the achievement of vocational and personal knowledge, skills and competences. It allows progression to the next level on the Irish NFQ.
- The NFQ Level 5 Certificate enables learners to develop a broad range of skills which are vocationally specific. This qualification allows progression to further and higher education and training programmes.
- The Advanced Certificate at NFQ level 6 enables learners to develop a comprehensive range of skills which are vocationally specific. Holders of the Advanced Certificate typically take up employment or progress to higher education and training programmes.

Comparison of VET Qualifications

VET Qualifications in Ireland	NFQ Level	EQF	HKQF Level	VET Qualifications in Hong Kong
Advanced Certificate	6	5	4	Higher Diploma
Level 5 Certificate	5	4	3	Diploma of Vocational Education
				Diploma of Foundation Studies
				Diploma Yi Jin
Level 4 Certificate	4	3	2	Certificate of Vocational Education
Level 3 Certificate	3	2	1	Foundation Certificate
Level 2 Certificate	2	1	No Match	No Match
Level 1 Certificate	1			

THIS GUIDE HELPS USERS OF QUALIFICATIONS IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- **It provides information showing how qualifications are organised and relate to each other in Hong Kong and Ireland**
- **It makes it possible to draw broad comparisons between qualifications and their levels in Ireland and Hong Kong**
- **Recognition bodies could use this User Guide to facilitate recognition of Hong Kong or Ireland qualifications for student admission, employment and other purposes**
- **It facilitates wider collaboration between institutions and other organisations in both Hong Kong and Ireland on the basis of recognised qualifications.**

As entry qualifications for jobs and further studies can vary, check the specific requirements with the relevant bodies in Hong Kong and Ireland in addition to this guide.

MAKE THE CONNECTION AND SEEK ADVICE ON TRAVELLING WITH YOUR QUALIFICATION

Ireland

NARIC Ireland

www.naric.ie

Irish National Framework of Qualifications
(Irish NFQ)

www.nfq.ie

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

www.qqi.ie

Professional Qualifications Recognition

www.education.ie

Hong Kong

Qualifications Framework Secretariat (QFS)

www.hkqf.gov.hk

Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic
and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ)

info@hkcaavq.edu.hk

European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

www.ploteus.eu



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Supported by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



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2017