

Correspondences between UK and Irish frameworks with European qualifications frameworks

Within Europe, two overarching qualifications frameworks exist to which the national qualifications frameworks of the UK and Ireland relate: The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA) also known as the Bologna Framework.

Table 1 shows the correspondence of levels established between national qualifications frameworks and the EQF:

European Qualifications Framework (EQF)	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England/Northern Ireland (FHEQ)	Regulated Qualifications Framework England/Northern Ireland (RQF)	Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)	The National Framework of Qualifications for Ireland (NFQ IE)
8	8	8	8	12	10
7	7	7	7	11	9
6	6	6	6	10/9	8/7
5	5/4	5/4	5/4	8/7	6
4		3	3	6	5
3		2	2	5	4
2		1	1	4	3
1		E3	E3	3	2/1
		E2	E2	2	
		E1	E1	1	

Table 2 shows the outcome of verifying the compatibility of higher education frameworks for Scotland (FQHEIS/SCQF), for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) and for the NFQ for Ireland (NFQ IE) with the FQ-EHEA as follows:

Typical higher education qualifications within each level	FHEQ level	FQHEIS/SCQF level	NFQ IE level	Corresponding FQ-EHEA cycle
Doctoral degrees	8	12	10	Third cycle (end of cycle) qualifications
Master's degrees (including Integrated Master's)	7	11	9	Second cycle (end of cycle) qualifications
Postgraduate diplomas				Intermediate qualifications within the second cycle
Postgraduate certificates				
Bachelor's degrees with honours /Honours Bachelor Degrees	6	10	8	First cycle (end of cycle) qualifications
Irish Higher Diplomas				
Bachelor's degrees/ Ordinary Bachelor Degree				
Graduate diplomas	9	9		Intermediate qualifications within the first cycle
Graduate certificates				
Foundation Degrees (for example FdA, FdSc)	5	8	6	Short cycle qualifications
Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE)				
Higher National Diplomas (HND)				
Irish Higher Certificates	4	7		Intermediate qualifications within the short cycle
Higher National Certificates (HNC)				
Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE)				

For more information on compatibility with these frameworks see: http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/home_en.htm and www.enic-naric.net.

Scope of Apprenticeships across the UK and Ireland

Level	England	Northern Ireland	Wales	Ireland	Scotland
5	Higher Apprenticeship	Higher Level Apprenticeship	Higher Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship, Not yet developed	Professional Apprenticeship, Not yet developed
4	Higher Apprenticeship	Higher Level Apprenticeship	Higher Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	Professional Apprenticeship, Graduate Apprenticeship
3	Advanced Apprenticeship	Apprenticeships NI	Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	Professional Apprenticeship, Graduate Apprenticeship
2	Intermediate Apprenticeship	Traineeships NI	Foundation Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	Graduate Apprenticeship, Technical Apprenticeship
	Degree Apprenticeship: Must include a Degree	Levels 4-8: primarily based on a single higher-level qualification at each level	Must include a qualification	Must lead to an existing qualification type	Technical Apprenticeship, Higher Apprenticeship
	Higher/Advanced/Intermediate Apprenticeship: May include a qualification	Branding and marketing exercise in 2019/20 may lead to differentiation between the HLAs at the various levels			Modern Apprenticeship
					Modern Apprenticeship, Foundation Apprenticeship
					Modern Apprenticeship

Qualifications can Cross Boundaries

A guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland

How to use this leaflet:

- This leaflet provides information that allows you to look at the ways qualifications are organised in the UK and Ireland.
- It shows which qualifications in other countries are broadly comparable in terms of the level of challenge to your qualifications (or those that you are interested in taking).
- On the left side of the principal table you will find the main stages of education or employment - you can find where you are in these stages.
- 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 in terms of the level of challenge, rather than direct equivalences, between qualifications and their levels for each country.
- The back page indicates how UK and Irish qualifications frameworks relate to qualifications frameworks in Europe.
- This leaflet is updated periodically. Check one of the websites for the most up-to-date version.



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Main stages of education/employment Qualifications can be taken at any age in order to continue or return to education or training	Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland www.qaa.ac.uk	Regulated Qualifications Framework for England and Northern Ireland www.ofqual.gov.uk www.ccea.org.uk	Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales www.cqfw.net	National Framework of Qualifications for Ireland www.cqi.ie	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework www.sccqf.org.uk
	LEVEL	LEVEL	LEVEL	LEVEL	LEVEL
Professional or postgraduate education, research or employment	8 Doctoral Degree	8 Vocational, Technical and Professional Qualifications	8 Doctoral Degree, Vocational Qualifications	10 Doctoral Degree, Higher Doctorate	12 Doctoral Degree, Professional Apprenticeship, Professional Development Award (PDA), Award
Higher education Advanced Skills Training	7 Master's Degree, Integrated Master's Degree, Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Postgraduate Certificate	7 Vocational, Technical and Professional Qualifications	7 Master's Degree, Vocational Qualifications, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	9 Master's Degree, Postgraduate Diploma	11 Master's Degree, Integrated Master's Degree, Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate, Professional Apprenticeship, Graduate Apprenticeship, PDA, SVQ, Award
Entry to professional graduate employment	6 Bachelor's Degree with Honours, Bachelor's Degree, Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	6 Vocational, Technical and Professional Qualifications	6 Honours Degree, Vocational Qualifications, Professional Certificate in Education	8 Honours Bachelor Degree, Higher Diploma	10 Bachelor's Degree with Honours, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate, Professional Apprenticeship, Graduate Apprenticeship, PDA, SVQ, Award
Specialised education and training	5 Foundation Degree, Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diploma (HND)	5 Vocational, Technical and Professional Qualifications, Higher National Diploma (HND)	5 Foundation Degree, Vocational Qualifications, Higher National Diploma (HND)	7 Ordinary Bachelor Degree	9 Bachelor's/Ordinary Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Apprenticeship, Technical Apprenticeship, PDA, SVQ, Award
Qualified/Skilled worker Entry to higher education Completion of secondary education	4 Higher National Certificate (HNC), Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)	4 Vocational, Technical and Professional Qualifications, Higher National Certificate (HNC)	4 Higher National Certificate (HNC), Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE), Vocational Qualifications	6 Advanced Certificate, Higher Certificate	8 Higher National Diploma (HND), Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE), Technical Apprenticeship, Higher Apprenticeship, PDA, SVQ, Award
Progression to skilled employment Continuation of secondary education	3 Access to HE Diploma*	3 Vocational, Technical and Professional Qualifications, GCE AS and A Level	3 Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced, Vocational Qualifications, GCE, AS and A Level, Access to HE	5 Level 5 Certificate, Leaving Certificate	7 Higher National Certificate (HNC), Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE), Modern Apprenticeship, PDA, SVQ, Scottish Baccalaureate, Advanced Higher, Award
Secondary education. Initial entry into employment or further education	*The Access to HE Diploma is regulated by QAA but is not part of the FHEQ 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 that are current and legacy at the time of publication in each country, you will need to consult the website given at the head of each column.	2 Vocational & Technical Qualifications, GCSE at grade A*-C and grade 9-4, Functional Skills (England), Essential Skills Qualification (NI)	2 Welsh Baccalaureate National, Vocational Qualifications, Essential Skills Wales Qualifications, GCSE at grade A*-C	4 Level 4 Certificate, Leaving Certificate	6 Modern Apprenticeship, Foundation Apprenticeship, National Progression Award (NPA), National Certificate, PDA, SVQ, Award
Qualifications can cross boundaries - a guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland, Seventh edition published September 2019	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.	1 Vocational & Technical Qualifications, GCSE at grade D-G and grade 3-1, Functional Skills (England), Essential Skills Qualifications (NI)	1 Welsh Baccalaureate Foundation, Vocational Qualifications, Essential Skills Wales Qualifications, GCSE at grade D-G	3 Level 3 Certificate, Junior Certificate	5 National 5, Modern Apprenticeship, SVQ, NPA, National Certificate, Award
		Entry Level Entry Level Certificate (sub levels 1-3), Functional Skills (England), Essential Skills Qualifications (NI)	Entry Level Entry Level Qualifications, Essential Skills Qualifications	2 Level 2 Certificate	4 National 4, SVQ, NPA, National Certificate Award
				1 Level 1 Certificate	3 National 3, NPA, National Certificate, Award
					2 National 2, NPA, National Certificate, Award
					1 National 1, Award

