



**QQI**

Quality and Qualifications Ireland  
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

# PROFESSIONAL AWARD-TYPE DESCRIPTORS (AWARD CLASS: PROFESSIONAL) FOR THE ALIGNMENT OF PROFESSIONAL AWARDS AT NFQ LEVELS 7, 8 AND 9.

[www.QQI.ie](http://www.QQI.ie)

# Professional Award-type Descriptors (Award Class: Professional) For the Alignment of Professional Awards at NFQ Levels 7, 8 and 9.

	Thread	L7	L8	L9
		Level 7 Professional Award	Level 8 Professional Award	Level 9 Professional Award
<b>Volume</b>	Volume of corresponding programme	<b>Variable. Normally the volume of newly certified learning will be at least 30 credits or equivalent however, in exceptional conditions this may be waived by the Authority.</b>	<b>Variable. Normally the volume of newly certified learning will be at least 30 credits or equivalent however, in exceptional conditions this may be waived by the Authority.</b>	<b>Variable. Normally the volume of newly certified learning will be at least 30 credits or equivalent however, in exceptional conditions this may be waived by the Authority.</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	The uses to which the knowledge, skill and competence will be put	The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are proper to <u>autonomous professional practice typically in a structured setting or in an organisation</u> , as well as relevant to personal development, participation in society, employment and study including access to additional formal education and training	The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are proper to <u>independent professional practice</u> , well as relevant to personal development, participation in society, employment and study including access to additional formal education and training	The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are proper to <u>advanced and/or innovative independent professional practice</u> , well as relevant to personal development, participation in society, employment and study including access to additional formal education and training
<b>Knowledge— Breadth and Kind</b>	<p>Knowledge scope and coherence</p> <p>Knowledge structure</p> <p>Knowledge of issues</p>	<p>Broad and up-to-date general knowledge and specialised knowledge of a variety of areas comprising a professional discipline and of the connections between these areas and with related disciplines</p> <p>Understanding of facts, concepts, rules, models, schools of thought, methods, technology; their development and limitations; and how they arise and are applied in current professional practice</p> <p>Knowledge of the context for professional practice (including regulatory, economic, scientific, technological, social and cultural aspects) and awareness of other disciplines likely to be encountered as a practitioner and member of the profession</p>	<p>Broad and up-to-date general knowledge and specialised knowledge of a variety of areas comprising a professional discipline and of the connections between these areas and with related disciplines; to include knowledge about recent developments and trends in the professional discipline or its practice</p> <p>Critical understanding of facts, concepts, rules, models, schools of thought, methods, technology; their development and limitations; and how they arise and are applied in current professional practice</p> <p>Knowledge of the context for professional practice (including regulatory, economic, scientific, technological, social and cultural aspects) and of significant issues at the interfaces with related disciplines and professions</p>	<p>Broad and up-to-date general knowledge and specialised knowledge of a variety of areas comprising a professional discipline and of the connections between these areas and related disciplines; to include knowledge about recent developments and trends in the professional discipline or its practice;</p> <p>Comprehensive and critical evaluation of current developments and trends in the relevant professional or academic literature and as the basis for research or innovation and strategic change and leadership</p> <p>Knowledge of the wider context for practice in the profession including critical awareness and anticipation of the fundamental issues for the profession and at the interfaces with other disciplines and professions</p>
<b>Skill and know-how—Range and Selectivity</b>	<p>Use cognitive and practical skills (analytical and synthetic) to solve problems</p> <p>Draw insightful conclusions</p> <p>Communicate and influence</p>	<p>Select and apply advanced skills to analyse and respond to unpredictable and complex problems arising in the profession and its reflective practice.</p> <p>Prepare evidence-based conclusions that take due account of social, disciplinary and ethical insights</p> <p>Communicate information effectively, transfer one's knowledge and skills, and justify decisions, to specialists and non-specialists, including clients</p>	<p>Select, <b>modify</b> and apply advanced skills to critically analyse, research (under close guidance) and formulate responses to unpredictable, complex and ill-defined problems arising in the profession and its reflective professional practice</p> <p>Prepare and analyse evidence-based conclusions that take due account of social, disciplinary and ethical insights</p> <p>Communicate <b>advanced</b> information, transfer one's knowledge and skills, and justify decisions, to specialists and non-specialists, including clients</p>	<p>Select, modify and apply advanced skills, including research or innovation skills, to critically analyse, research independently and formulate responses to unpredictable, complex and ill-defined problems with many interacting factors, in order to develop new knowledge or procedures and integrate knowledge from other disciplines</p> <p>Prepare and <b>evaluate</b> evidence-based conclusions that take due account of social, disciplinary and ethical insights.</p> <p>Communicate <b>complex</b> information effectively, transfer one's knowledge and skills, and justify <b>recommendations and research findings</b>, to specialists and non-specialists, including clients; <b>influence and lead</b> professional practice</p>
<b>Competence— Context, Role, learning-to-learn and Insight</b>	Exercising autonomy and judgement	Exercise autonomy and judgement in applying knowledge and skills in a wide variety of contexts including professional practice and study	Exercise autonomy and judgement in applying knowledge and skills in a wide variety of <b>complex</b> contexts including professional practice and study,	Exercise autonomy and judgement in applying knowledge and skills in a wide variety of complex contexts, including professional practice and study, and transfer them to unfamiliar and emerging contexts

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	Exercising responsibility	Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making and decisions in unpredictable work or study contexts	Manage complex and innovative technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making and decisions in unpredictable and unfamiliar work or study contexts, balancing responsibilities towards service-users and employer,	Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches; take responsibility for decisions and contributing to professional knowledge and practice
	Working with others	Act effectively in team roles and take responsibility for managing individuals and groups	Act effectively in team roles and take responsibility for managing individuals and lead complex and heterogeneous groups	Act effectively in team roles and take responsibility for managing individuals and lead complex and heterogeneous groups and for reviewing the strategic performance of teams
	Learning and teaching	Take initiative to identify and address learning needs; seek necessary guidance when working independently	Manage learning tasks independently, professionally and ethically; seek necessary guidance when working independently and provide guidance to peers	Evaluate learning needs of self and others and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development of same;
	Attitudes	Express an internalised personal world-view (see Notes below) manifesting solidarity with others at all levels including the personal, professional, societal, and environmental	Express a comprehensive internalised, personal and professional world-view, manifesting solidarity with others at all levels including the personal, professional, societal and environmental	Scrutinise and reflect on social and professional norms and relationships and act to change them in the interests of professional standards, society or the wider environment
<b>Articulation and Progression</b>	Possible entry points to corresponding programmes and the associated ECTS (or equivalent) credit.	From completion of a broad secondary-level education (to NFQ Level 5) into autonomous professional practice (normal minimum 180 ECTS or equivalent) but normally from an Ordinary Bachelor's Degree into autonomous professional practice ; a change of discipline will involve an instructional element	From completion of a broad secondary-level education (to Level 5) into autonomous professional practice (normal minimum 240 ECTS or equivalent) but normally from an Ordinary or Honours Bachelor's Degree into autonomous professional practice; a change of discipline will involve an instructional element	From an Ordinary or Honours Bachelor's Degree into autonomous professional practice (normal minimum 120 and 90 ECTS respectively); a change of discipline will involve an instructional element
<b>Assessment</b>	What must be assessed and the level of rigour expected	The <u>minimum</u> expected knowledge, skill and competence associated with the award must be expressed and validly and reliably assessed	The <u>minimum</u> expected knowledge, skill and competence associated with the award must be expressed and validly and reliably assessed	The <u>minimum</u> expected knowledge, skill and competence associated with the award must be expressed and validly and reliably assessed

## Notes:

World-view: A set of fundamental beliefs, attitudes, values, etc., determining or constituting a comprehensive outlook on life, the universe, etc. Oxford Dictionary 1997

Research: The word 'research' is used to cover a wide variety of activities, with the context often related to a field of study; the term is used here to represent a careful study or investigation based on a systematic understanding and critical awareness of knowledge. The word is used in an inclusive way to accommodate the range of activities that support original and innovative work in the whole range of academic, professional and technological fields, including the humanities, and traditional, performing, and other creative arts. It is not used in any limited or restricted sense, or relating solely to a traditional 'scientific method'. Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area 2005 (and Dublin Descriptors before this)

Cumulative levels: Note that the levels of learning are cumulative—learning at Level N assumes attainment of Level N-1—the grey text is learning attained from a lower level.

## Acknowledgement

The gloss above contains material (directly or paraphrased) from some of the following sources and is generally informed by them. The text would be unreadable if fragments were individually cited.

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## **National Framework of Qualifications (Ireland)**

<http://www.nfq.ie>

## **Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) UK**

[http://www.qcda.gov.uk/docs/QFUK\\_Joint\\_Report\\_140pp.pdf](http://www.qcda.gov.uk/docs/QFUK_Joint_Report_140pp.pdf)

## **Dublin Descriptors Joint Quality Initiative**

<http://www.jointquality.org/content/descriptors/CompletesetDublinDescriptors.doc>

## **Qualifications Framework Denmark**

<http://en.iu.dk/transparency/qualifications-frameworks/levels/level-7>

## **Australian Qualifications Framework (incl. Vocational Graduate Diploma) (Also the final version adopted in March 2011)**

<http://www.aqf.edu.au/Portals/0/Documents/The%20Australian%20Qualifications%20Framework%20for%20MCTEE%20approval%2019%20Nov%202010.pdf>

## **Accounting Threshold Learning Outcomes – Draft 2 (Australian Business Deans Council and Australian Teaching and Learning Council)**

<http://www.abdc.edu.au/download.php?id=244793,246,1>

## **German Qualifications Framework**

[http://www.akkreditierungsrat.de/fileadmin/Seiteninhalte/Dokumente/kmk/kmk\\_englisch/kmk\\_qualification\\_framework\\_apr\\_05.pdf](http://www.akkreditierungsrat.de/fileadmin/Seiteninhalte/Dokumente/kmk/kmk_englisch/kmk_qualification_framework_apr_05.pdf)

## **Criteria for Academic Bachelor's and Master's Curricula (Engineering) Netherlands**

[http://www.jointquality.org/content/descriptors/AC\\_English\\_Gweb.pdf](http://www.jointquality.org/content/descriptors/AC_English_Gweb.pdf)

## **Implementation Of The Bologna Process: Learning Outcomes And Level Descriptors**

[http://www.tcd.ie/vpcao/academic-development/assets/pdf/tcd\\_level\\_descriptors\\_full\\_text\\_council\\_8\\_march\\_06.pdf](http://www.tcd.ie/vpcao/academic-development/assets/pdf/tcd_level_descriptors_full_text_council_8_march_06.pdf)

## **UKIPG Education Position Statement**

[http://www.ukipg.org.uk/publications/Educ\\_Position\\_Statement.pdf](http://www.ukipg.org.uk/publications/Educ_Position_Statement.pdf)

## **A number of university websites detailing information about relevant business programmes were also considered**

[http://www.qcda.gov.uk/docs/QFUK\\_Joint\\_Report\\_140pp.pdf](http://www.qcda.gov.uk/docs/QFUK_Joint_Report_140pp.pdf)

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## **Criteria for Academic Bachelor's and Master's Curricula (Engineering) Netherlands**

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## **Implementation Of The Bologna Process: Learning Outcomes And Level Descriptors**

[http://www.tcd.ie/vpcao/academic-development/assets/pdf/tcd\\_level\\_descriptors\\_full\\_text\\_council\\_8\\_march\\_06.pdf](http://www.tcd.ie/vpcao/academic-development/assets/pdf/tcd_level_descriptors_full_text_council_8_march_06.pdf)

## **UKIPG Education Position Statement**

[http://www.ukipg.org.uk/publications/Educ\\_Position\\_Statement.pdf](http://www.ukipg.org.uk/publications/Educ_Position_Statement.pdf)

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