



Dearbhú Cáilíochta  
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann  
Quality and  
Qualifications Ireland

# QAI AWARDS STANDARDS.

Retail

December 2023





# Foreword

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012 requires QQI to ‘determine the standards of knowledge, skill or competence to be acquired, and where appropriate, demonstrated, by a learner before an award may be made by the Authority’. QQI award standards are based on the level indicators and award type descriptors of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and are governed by QQI Policy for the Determination of Award Standards.

Based on systematic engagement with subject matter expertise and public consultation, award standards for certain broad fields of learning were developed for QQI awards at level 1-4 on the NFQ. These standards represent an elaboration of the generic descriptors of the NFQ. They should facilitate experts in particular fields of learning to create the link between their programmes’ intended learning outcomes and the NFQ. Each award standard is cumulative, the statements of knowledge, skill and competence at NFQ levels 2, 3 and 4, build on the attainment of standards at lower levels, which are not necessarily reproduced at the higher level(s). The implementation and use of these standards is subject to QQI Policy and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes and QQI Policy for the Making of Awards. Whenever an award standard changes, programmes must be updated and validated against the new standards.

These standards are not programme specifications. It is through these, however, that the relationship between a programme, its component parts and the NFQ should be evident. The standards are a reference point and a point of comparison against which individual programmes may be justified.

They are intended to provide general guidance for articulating the learning outcomes associated with a particular field of learning. In designing programmes, providers must take cognisance of the standards for specific fields of learning where they generally relate to the programme being developed. It is, however, recognised that there is a significant growth in multi-disciplinary/inter-disciplinary programmes; there are emerging fields of learning; and in addition, within each field there is the vast spectrum of programmes possible based on a wide range of purpose. In this context, it is not possible to have a standard, or multiple standards, that cater for the complete range of programmes possible. It is therefore expected that the standards for specific fields of learning will be used as reference points for the design of programmes. In designing programmes, providers can draw from more than one standard.

In drafting the standards every effort has been made to ensure that they will provide for flexibility and variety in the design of programmes and therefore encourage innovation within an overall agreed framework. It is not expected that all programmes will include every learning outcome identified in a standard. It is, however, expected that many programmes will include learning outcomes that are not included in the relevant standard.

When designing a programme, each learning outcome in the standard should be considered. Where departure from these is necessary, it should be justified in the context of the specific orientation of the programme and other facts pertaining to it. Each programme provider should be able to demonstrate how the design and content of its own programmes has been informed by the standard.

The level descriptors of the Framework, the award type descriptors and consequently the standards for the specific fields of learning are divided into three different types of learning outcomes - knowledge, skill and competence. These strands are further subdivided into eight sub-strands. Each strand/sub-strand is important. The relative weighting of each strand in a programme will vary from programme to programme. The weighting will be determined by many factors, including for example, the practical nature of a programme, or otherwise.

Each strand/sub-strand should be addressed appropriately in every programme. Where a programme is multidisciplinary or inter-disciplinary in nature, the use of more than one standard may be necessary. In such cases, the scope, depth and balance of knowledge, skill and competence should be attended to.

The titles of awards made by QQI on foot of these award standards shall be consistent with QQI Policy on the Making of Awards with an exception in the case of major awards where the named award stem shall have the following form: 'Level X Certificate in Lifelong Learning in' [specialisation].

These standards are determined by QQI under section 49(1) of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 2012.

#### AWARD STANDARDS – RETAIL AT NFQ LEVELS 3 TO 4

##### Purpose

The purpose of this broad award standard is to enable the design of a variety of programmes enabling the learner to develop the relevant knowledge, skill and competence relating to the retail sector.

##### **Note: The indicators at each level build on the skills from the previous one.**

The outcomes at each NFQ level include those of all the lower levels in the same sub-strand unless stated otherwise.



NFQ	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Knowledge breadth	Knowledge moderately broad in range	<b>Broad range of knowledge</b>
Knowledge kind	Mainly concrete in reference and with some comprehension of relationship between knowledge elements	<b>Mainly concrete in reference and with some elements of abstraction or theory</b>
	<b>The learner should be able to show:</b>	<b>The learner should be able to show:</b>
<b>Scope</b>	Knowledge of basic elements, including terms, related to customer service and retail practice.	Knowledge and understanding of basic elements, including terms and concepts, related to customer service and retail practice.
<b>Basic concepts and legal obligations</b>	General knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• basic concepts and terms used in retail practices including merchandising, stock control, sales and marketing</li> <li>• fundamental legal obligations relating to retail practices including environmental responsibilities, staff and customer obligations.</li> </ul>	General knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• basic concepts and main legal implications relating to retail practices including merchandising, stock control, sales and marketing</li> <li>• main legal implications relating to retail practices including environmental responsibilities, staff, and customer obligations.</li> </ul>
<b>Importance of communications skills and digital literacy</b>	Awareness of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the importance of effective communication skills in a retail environment</li> <li>• how digital technologies can support business.</li> </ul>	Understand the importance of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• digital technologies in retail environment</li> <li>• the role of effective communication skills in a retail environment.</li> </ul>
<b>Importance of communications skills and digital literacy</b>	Awareness of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the importance of effective communication skills in a retail environment</li> <li>• how digital technologies can support business.</li> </ul>	Understand the importance of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• digital technologies in retail environment</li> <li>• the role of effective communication skills in a retail environment.</li> </ul>



<b>Product knowledge</b>	Knowledge of the main kinds of product that customers require (for example, design, ingredients, price, sustainability, origin, and so on).	Knowledge of the main kinds of product that customers require.
<b>Selling principles and environments</b>	An awareness of the key principles of retail selling.	General knowledge of the key principles of retail selling and the different retail environments including physical and online.



NFQ	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Know-how and skill range	Show a limited range or practical and cognitive skills and tools	Show a moderate range of practical and cognitive skills and tools
Know-how and skill selectivity	Select from a limited range of varied procedures and apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems	Select from a range of procedures and apply known solutions to a variety of predictable problems
	<p>Able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apply routine techniques and procedures in the retail sector including sales techniques, apply digital skills, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and customer service skills</li> <li>• take direction selecting appropriate responses and standard procedures in relation to customer needs within a retail environment.</li> <li>• follow basic procedures used in a retail environment</li> <li>• take direction applying a limited range of personal and self-efficacy skills (belief in self to complete tasks) required for initial employment in a retail environment (for example, core skills, time management and IT skills, and so on)</li> <li>• identify the elements of effective interaction with customers in a retail environment</li> <li>• show communication skills by presenting a moderate range of products and services to customers</li> <li>• take direction showing their ability to sell products and services in a retail environment</li> <li>• take direction showing the different applications of key retail selling principles in physical and online retail settings.</li> </ul>	<p>Able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• select and apply a range of appropriate techniques and procedures use in the retail sector to include sales techniques, apply digital skills, use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and customer service skills</li> <li>• select appropriate responses and standard procedures in relation to customer needs within a retail environment</li> <li>• follow a range of procedures used in a retail environment</li> <li>• take direction applying a range of personal, self-efficacy (self-belief and capacity) and people skills required for employment in a retail environment</li> <li>• explain the elements of effective interaction with customers and its importance in a retail environment</li> <li>• show communication skills by presenting a range of products and services to customers</li> <li>• show the ability to sell products and services in a retail environment</li> <li>• show the different applications of key retail selling principles in physical and online retail settings.</li> </ul>



NFQ	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Competence context	<b>Act within a limited range of contexts</b>	<b>Act in familiar and unfamiliar contexts</b>
	Under direction, act within a familiar range of retail service settings.	Under direction, act within a range of retail service contexts.
Competence role	<b>Act under direction with limited autonomy; function within familiar, homogenous groups</b>	<b>Act with considerable amount of responsibility and autonomy</b>
	Carry out duties and exercise limited responsibility in familiar retail roles, for example Retail Assistant.  Take direction participating effectively and safely while working in teams and cooperating with others.	Carry out duties and exercise limited responsibility in retail roles.  Take part effectively and safely while working in teams and cooperating with others.
Competence learning to learn	<b>Learn to learn within a managed environment</b>	<b>Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a supervised environment</b>
	Take up and take part in on-the-job learning and progression opportunities.  Develop an awareness of different ways to learn about products or services in a retail environment.	Under supervision, begin to take responsibility for own learning and development in a retail environment.



NFQ	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Competence insight	<b>Assume limited responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour</b>	<b>Assume partial responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour</b>
	Show an awareness of one's personal values and an understanding of the broader contribution of individuals to the retail sector.	Show an awareness of the influence of attitudes and behaviour on interactions and relationships with customers and colleagues.  Reflect on personal values and display an insight into the broader contribution of individuals to the retail sector.



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