

QQI WHITE PAPER

Policy on Qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 and;
Outline of the Structure of the National Framework of
Qualifications (NFQ)

FOR CONSULTATION



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INTRODUCTION TO WHITE PAPER

This White Paper is the next step following consultation on the Green Paper on Intermediate Qualifications¹ at NFQ Levels 5 and 6². This White Paper proposes two new documents to explain qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6.

1. Policy on Qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6
2. Outline of the Structure of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) 2025

The Policy on Qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 will outline the major awards available at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 and the relationship between them. It will confirm the award-type descriptors; approaches for non-major awards at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 and access, transfer and progression. Credit, credit transfer and credit accumulation systems will be briefly explained but the QQI Access, Transfer and Progression Policy³ will be the definitive source of information in relation to credit, credit transfer and credit accumulation in the Irish education and training system.

Please note that the award-type descriptor for the Level 5 Certificate is unchanged and feedback is not invited on this aspect of the policy. The award-type descriptor for the Level 6 Diploma uses language from the Grid of Level Indicators⁴.

The Outline of the Structure of the NFQ 2025 will include award-type descriptors for all major awards including the Level 6 Diploma. This will become the definitive document regarding award-type descriptors for major awards and previous documents [the Determinations for the Outline National Framework of Qualifications] will be retired. The Outline of the Structure of the NFQ will be an interim document pending the comprehensive review of the NFQ which is described in the Programme for Review of NFQ Policies.⁵

Please note that the Outline of the Structure of the NFQ reflects necessary updates arising from the Policy on Qualifications on NFQ Levels 5 and 6; legislation; and changes to the education and training sector and is presented for information. Most of the content presented in the document is taken from the original determinations. As such, feedback should be focused on the Policy on Qualifications on NFQ Levels 5 and 6.

1 Please note that the term 'intermediate qualifications' is no longer being used in this context.

2 [qqi-green-paper-on-intermediate-qualifications-at-nfq-levels-5-6-1.pdf](#)

3 This document is yet to be published. The Green Paper on a QQI ATP policy was published in December 2024. [qqi-green-paper-on-qqi-s-access-transfer-and-progression-policy.pdf](#)

4 [NFQ Grid Level Indicators.pdf](#)

5 [programme-for-review-of-national-framework-of-qualifications-nfq-policies-future-proofing-the-nfq.pdf](#)

By way of reminder, some of the language used to describe the proposal initially outlined in the Green Paper² has been amended. The White Paper has the title ‘White Paper on Qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6’ removing the use of the word intermediate in this context. The word intermediate is, instead, used to replace the term ‘partial’ in relation to partial qualifications. This is in keeping with the existing European approach to intermediate qualifications whereby the short cycle qualification is an intermediate qualification in the Bologna first cycle, and the postgraduate diploma at NFQ Level 9 is an intermediate qualification in the Bologna second cycle.

The consultation on the White Paper will be open until Friday 7 November 2025, and submissions can be emailed to nfq@qqi.ie with White Paper Consultation NFQ Levels 5 and 6 in the subject line.

POLICY ON QUALIFICATIONS AT NFQ LEVELS 5 AND 6

1. BACKGROUND

The Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) is a system of levels for qualifications and is a single framework, covering school, tertiary education and professional awards. It assumes that the learning to be acquired for any educational or training qualification⁶ can be described in terms of knowledge, skill or competence and that these can be represented by statements of learning outcomes. The NFQ includes 10 levels, which are defined by the NFQ Grid of Level Indicators⁷ for each of three strands of learning (knowledge, skill and competence). These strands are further divided into a total of eight sub-strands.

There are five classes of NFQ awards. The four original ones include Major, Minor, Special Purpose, and Supplemental and the more recently established one is the Professional class of awards. Each of the NFQ classes also includes a range of award types. Each of these awards have a NFQ award-type descriptor that functions as the most general expression of standards for these qualifications. The original major award-type descriptors were mostly built using elements from the grid of level indicators. Some of these descriptors combine learning outcome indicators drawn from a mixture of NFQ Levels.

The Determinations for the Outline National Framework of Qualifications⁸ published in 2003 contain the award-type descriptors for all major awards. In December 2024, QQI published a Green Paper on (Intermediate)⁹ Qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6¹⁰ which proposed the introduction of a new major award at NFQ Level 6 to replace both the Advanced and Higher Certificates. A consultation report summarising the submissions received from a wide range of stakeholders was published.

2. INTRODUCTION

This Policy on Qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 is the definitive source of information about the major awards available at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 and is the policy on non-major awards at these levels. This policy is supported by the updated Outline of the Structure of the National Framework of Qualifications.

2.1. Qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6

Qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 are important in their own right and key entry and transition points between the upper secondary school and higher education systems.

⁶ Please note that the terms qualifications and awards are used interchangeably to mean the same thing.

⁷ [NFQ Grid Level Indicators.pdf \(qqi.ie\)](#)

⁸ [determinations.qxd](#)

⁹ Please note that the term 'intermediate qualifications' is no longer being used in this context.

¹⁰ [qqi-green-paper-on-intermediate-qualifications-at-nfq-levels-5-6-1.pdf](#)

The major awards available at these levels are:

- Level 5 Certificate – major award at NFQ Level 5
- Level 6 Diploma – major award at NFQ Level 6

Non-major awards at these levels are also important for access, transfer and progression, social inclusion, lifelong learning and flexible learning. Non-major awards are smaller qualifications developed using the award-type descriptors for minor awards, special purpose awards or supplemental awards.

NFQ Levels 5 and 6 represent a shared space occupied by both further and higher education providers and these qualifications are simply defined by their level in the Irish NFQ. Qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 can be awarded by Designated Awarding Bodies (DABs) which includes universities, technological universities, institutes of technology and the RCSI; QQI; and Listed Awarding Bodies (LABs). QQI may also delegate authority to make these awards to relevant providers that meet certain criteria.

Awards at NFQ Level 5 are most commonly offered by further education and training providers and mainly Education and Training Boards (ETBs) while awards at NFQ Level 6 are offered by both further and higher education providers, noting that further education and training providers continue to be more active in the delivery of qualifications at NFQ Level 6.

2.1.1. Credit, Credit Transfer and Credit Accumulation

While the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) was originally developed for use by higher education institutions, the European Council has recommended its more widespread use in post-secondary education. As such, ECTS credit is used for all major and non-major qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6. The QQI Access, Transfer and Progression Policy is the definitive source of information on the credit systems in the Irish education and training system.

Credit achieved at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 can be transferred and accumulated towards the achievement of the Level 5 Certificate and the Level 6 Diploma. It may also be transferred and accumulated towards programmes leading to awards at NFQ Levels 7 and 8, where appropriate.

Programmes leading to both major and non-major awards at NFQ levels 5 and 6 can be delivered flexibly to support credit accumulation for learners.

Major awards can continue to be delivered in a manner which supports the achievement of minor and/or component awards and the certification of these for learners. Where a learner exits with minor and/or component awards, they must be re-admitted to the programme at the point of exit.

Credit achieved via micro-qualifications and micro-credentials at NFQ levels 5 and 6 can be used for certification of these awards but also for credit transfer and accumulation towards other awards as appropriate.

2.2. Purpose of Qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6

Qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 are multi-purpose. There are four main purposes of these qualifications:

- A. Access to labour markets and employment including meeting the requirements of occupational standards
 - Major and non-major awards at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 are suitable for entry to labour markets and employment. Their associated awards standards are suitable for meeting occupational standards, where appropriate.
 - The Irish Register of Qualifications will, in time, communicate which qualifications (at any level of the NFQ) meet professional standards requirements.
 - In some cases, awards at these levels are specified in statutory or other regulatory instruments as requirements for work or access to specific occupations.
- B. Social Inclusion
 - Qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 provide important learning and social inclusion opportunities for learners from diverse educational backgrounds, including second chance opportunities for learners that are returning to education.
 - These qualifications are an important progression route for learners with NFQ Level 4 qualifications including those who may have started their journey by achieving general education qualifications at NFQ Levels 1-3.
 - Qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 often provide flexible learning opportunities in settings that are close to home.
 - These qualifications may have the added benefit of providing access to labour markets and employment which can support learners in their journey to additional study.
- C. Lifelong Learning
 - These qualifications contribute to a lifelong learning society as they act as both primary and supplementary qualifications.
 - *Primary*: these qualifications might be the primary or initial qualification a person achieves for access to employment and the labour market.
 - *Supplementary*: these qualifications might be an additional or supplementary qualification a person achieves to supplement previous learning at the same or higher level of the NFQ. Similarly, a person may attain qualifications initially at a higher NFQ level and then undertake a more professionally or vocationally oriented qualification at NFQ Levels 5 and 6.
 - Non-major awards at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 are also important in lifelong learning. These qualifications are likely to be supplementary qualifications that are

focused on skills and/or knowledge acquisition that might be professionally or personally relevant.

D. Progression to additional education

- Qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 are important transition points for learners seeking to transfer or progress to additional education.
- Major awards at these levels provide progression opportunities to qualifications at NFQ Levels 6, 7 and 8 while non-major awards provide transfer opportunities to additional education at NFQ Levels 5 and 6.

3. LEVEL 5 CERTIFICATE

3.1. Overview

- The Level 5 Certificate is a major award at NFQ Level 5.
- The Level 5 Certificate consists of at least 60 ECTS credits.
- It is typically achieved in at least one year of full-time study (or equivalent).
- It is a full qualification at NFQ Level 5. (i.e.) a qualification in its own right.
- It is also an intermediate qualification of the Level 6 Diploma, which is a major award at NFQ Level 6.
- 60% of the credit volume associated with the Level 5 Certificate must be undertaken at NFQ Level 5, while the remainder of the credit may be at a level above or below NFQ Level 5.
- Learning outcomes associated with NFQ Level 5 may be used to describe learning achieved in the first year of programmes leading to awards at NFQ Levels 7 and 8, where appropriate.

3.2. European Referencing

- The Level 5 Certificate is equivalent to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Level 4.
- The Level 5 Certificate is an intermediate qualification of the short cycle of the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) sometimes referred to as the Bologna Framework.

3.3. Access, Transfer and Progression

Access, Transfer and Progression pathways for the Level 5 Certificate are in keeping with previous approaches.

3.3.1. Access

Access to the Level 5 Certificate is provided for in the award-type descriptors for awards at lower levels of the NFQ. As previously outlined, holders of the Level 4 Certificate and Leaving Certificate (achieved through the established, applied or vocational programme routes) can progress directly to the Level 5 Certificate.

Holders of a Junior Certificate/Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement can progress to the Leaving Certificate or to the Level 4 Certificate or a programme leading to an award at a higher level.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) can be used to facilitate access.

3.3.2. Transfer

Transfer relates to programmes leading to awards at the same NFQ level. Learners may transfer from one programme leading to the Level 5 Certificate to a different programme leading to a Level 5 Certificate.

Learners may also transfer to programmes leading to non-major awards at NFQ Level 5.

3.3.3. Progression

Learners holding the Level 5 Certificate will be able to progress directly into Year 2 of a relevant Level 6 Diploma as the Level 5 Certificate is an intermediate qualification of the Level 6 Diploma.

Learners will also be able to progress to programmes leading to awards at NFQ Levels 7 or 8.

3.3.4. Articulation

Articulation arrangements can provide for entry into Year 2 of ab initio programmes leading to awards at NFQ Levels 6, 7 or 8. Where a primary degree programme leads to an award at NFQ Level 9, articulation arrangements may also allow for entry into Year 2.

3.4. Exit and/or Embedded Awards

Exit and/or embedded awards available for the Level 5 Certificate can only be non-major awards at NFQ Levels 4 and 5, depending on the credit with which the award is associated. These awards must be less than 60 ECTS credits.

These awards can be micro-credentials where they are less than 30 ECTS and where they are in line with the award-type descriptors for the relevant minor, special purpose or supplemental award-types.

3.5. Award-type Descriptor for Level 5 Certificate

Title	Level 5 Certificate
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	5
Volume	Large
Knowledge - <i>Breadth</i>	Broad range of knowledge
Knowledge - <i>Kind</i>	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant underpinning theory
Know-how and skill - <i>Range</i>	Demonstrate a broad range of specialised skills and tools
Know-how and skill - <i>Selectivity</i>	Evaluate and use information to plan and develop investigative strategies and to determine solutions to varied unfamiliar problems.
Competence - <i>Context</i>	Act in a range of varied, and specific contexts taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs; identify and apply skill and knowledge to a wide variety of contexts.
Competence - <i>Role</i>	Exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities; join and function within multiple, complex and heterogenous groups
Competence - <i>Learning to Learn</i>	Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a managed environment
Competence - <i>Insight</i>	Assume full responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour
Progression and Transfer	Progression to a programme leading to a Level 6 Diploma, Ordinary Bachelor Degree or Honours Bachelor Degree
Articulation	It is possible to progress into Year 2 of a Level 6 Diploma as the Level 5 Certificate is an intermediate qualification of the Level 6 Diploma. It is possible to progress into Year 2 of a programme leading to an Ordinary Bachelor Degree or Honours Bachelor Degree where articular arrangements are in place or there is sufficient coherency of learning following an assessment.

4. LEVEL 6 DIPLOMA

4.1. Overview

- The Level 6 Diploma is a major award at NFQ Level 6
- The Level 6 Diploma consists of at least 120 ECTS credits.
- It is typically achieved in at least two academic years of full-time learning, though various other patterns of part-time and work-integrated learning are common.
- The first year of the programme may lead to the Level 5 Certificate.
- As such, the Level 6 Diploma will be awarded on completion of a two-year programme (or longer), or on completion of a one-year programme where a programme of typically one year duration and leading to a Level 5 Certificate precedes the Level 6 Diploma.
- At least 60 ECTS credits must be undertaken at NFQ Level 6. The remaining 60 ECTS can be achieved at levels below or above Level 6. Where the Level 5 Certificate makes up the remaining 60 ECTS credits, as outlined above, only 60% of these credits need to be at NFQ Level 5.
- Regardless of the approach to programme design, learners should be certified as having achieved a Level 6 Diploma of 120 ECTS achieved over at least two-years of full-time learning or equivalent part-time learning or demonstrated through approved RPL arrangements. Learners may also be certified as having achieved the Level 5 Certificate after the first year.
- The European Diploma Supplement, which must be issued to learners achieving the Level 6 Diploma, will make it clear, where two awards are offered, that both qualifications contributed to the overall achievement of the Level 6 Diploma.

Possible Design of 120 ECTS Level 6 Diploma¹¹

Year 1	Level 6 Diploma (120 ECTS)	Level 5 Certificate (60 ECTS)	Level 5 Minor Award (30 ECTS)
			Level 5 Minor Awards (30 ECTS)
Year 2		Level 6 Diploma (60 ECTS)	Level 6 Minor Award (30 ECTS)
			Level 6 Minor Award (30 ECTS)

¹¹ Other approaches are possible. This is for illustrative purpose only.

4.2. European Referencing

- The Level 6 Diploma is equivalent to EQF Level 5.
- The Level 6 Diploma is a short cycle qualification under the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF EHEA).

4.3. Access, Transfer and Progression

Access, Transfer and Progression pathways for the Level 6 Diploma are in keeping with previous approaches for major awards at NFQ Level 6.

4.3.1. Access

Access to the Level 6 Diploma is provided for in the award-type descriptors for awards at lower levels of the NFQ. As outlined, holders of the Level 5 Certificate and Leaving Certificate can progress directly to the Level 6 Diploma.

Recognition of prior learning can be used to support access to the programme. It is not necessary to conduct an RPL assessment of the Level 5 Certificate where an articulation arrangement is in place.

4.3.2. Transfer

Learners may transfer from one programme leading to a Level 6 Diploma to a different programme leading to a Level 6 Diploma.

Learners may also transfer to programmes leading to non-major awards at NFQ Level 6.

4.3.3. Progression

Learners holding the Level 6 Diploma will be able to progress to programmes leading to awards at NFQ Levels 7 or 8.

4.3.4. Articulation

Articulation arrangements can provide for entry into Year 3 of ab initio programmes leading to awards at NFQ Levels 7 or 8. Where a primary degree programme leads to an award at NFQ Level 9, articulation arrangements may also allow for entry into Year 3.

4.4. Exit and/or Embedded Awards

The Level 5 Certificate is available as an exit and/or embedded award for the Level 6 Diploma. It must meet the following conditions

- It is at least 60 ECTS and 60% of the credit volume is at NFQ Level 5.
- It meets the requirement of the award-type descriptor for the Level 5 Certificate.

Non-major awards are also available as exit and/or embedded awards from the Level 6 Diploma. These are available at NFQ Level 5 (for less than 60 ECTS) and NFQ Level 6 (for less than 120 ECTS).

4.5. Award-Type Descriptor for Level 6 Diploma

Title	Level 6 Diploma
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	6
Volume	Large
Knowledge - <i>Breadth</i>	Specialised knowledge of a broad area
Knowledge - <i>Kind</i>	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant underpinning theory
Know-how and skill - <i>Range</i>	Demonstrate comprehensive range of specialised skills and tools
Know-how and skill - <i>Selectivity</i>	Formulate responses to well defined abstract problems
Competence - <i>Context</i>	Act in a range of varied, and specific contexts involving creative and non-routine activities; transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of contexts
Competence - <i>Role</i>	Exercise substantial personal autonomy and often taken responsibility for the work of others and/or for the allocation of resources; form and function within, multiple complex and heterogenous groups
Competence - <i>Learning to Learn</i>	Learn to evaluate own learning and identify needs within a structured learning environment; assist others in identifying training needs
Competence - <i>Insight</i>	Express an internalised, personal world view, reflecting engagement with others
Progression and Transfer	Progression to a programme leading to an Ordinary Bachelor Degree or to an Honours Bachelor Degree
Articulation	It is possible to progress into Year 2 or 3 of a programme leading to an Ordinary Bachelor Degree or to an Honours Bachelor Degree where articular arrangements are in place or there is sufficient coherency of learning following an assessment.

5. OTHER AWARD TYPES AT NFQ LEVELS 5 AND 6

5.1. Professional Awards at NFQ Levels 5 and 6

The professional award-type descriptors¹² continue to be available for use in the development of professional awards, including apprenticeships, at NFQ Levels 5 and 6.

5.2. Non-Major Awards at NFQ Levels 5 and 6

Non-major awards are available at NFQ Levels 5 and 6. All non-major awards at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 will be expressed in terms of ECTS credits.

- *Minor awards* are a multi-purpose award-type that recognises attainment of part of a major award, and which has relevance in its own right.
- *Special purpose awards* meet specific, relatively narrow, focused, legislative, regulatory, economic, social or personal learning requirements,
- *Supplemental awards* are for learners who have already obtained a major or special purpose award. May be for refreshing/updating and continuous education and training with respect to an occupation/profession¹³

Minor, special purpose and supplemental award types are suitable for use in the development of micro-qualifications and micro-credentials until such time as a specific award type for micro-credentials is developed and implemented or alternative guidance is issued by QQI.

5.2.1. Titling Conventions

All non-major awards at NFQ Level 5 must use the following stems with reference to the relevant non-major award types

- Level 5 Minor Award
- Level 5 Special Purpose Award
- Level 5 Supplementary Award

All non-major awards at NFQ Level 6 can use the stem Certificate.

The following stems are also available in keeping with the non-major award types.

- Level 6 Minor Award
- Level 6 Special Purpose Award
- Level 6 Supplementary Award

¹² [Professional_Award-types_PS3_2014.pdf](#)

¹³ [descriptors-minor-spa-supplemental-awards.pdf](#)

6. RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS AT NFQ LEVELS 5 AND 6

6.1. Recognition of Advanced and Higher Certificates

Advanced and Higher Certificates will sunset out of the Irish qualifications system by 2030. However, both of these qualifications will continue to be considered equivalent to major qualifications at NFQ Level 6. Comparability statements will be added to the Naric Ireland¹⁴ database and the fan of legacy awards will be updated.

6.2. Recognition of Level 6 Diploma for Access

All Level 6 Diplomas must be recognised by Irish institutions for access to programmes leading to awards at NFQ Levels 7 and 8 regardless of where the programme was delivered, the awarding body or the composition of the programme (ie) if it includes credits at NFQ Level 5.

Articulation agreements and applications for advanced entry are not to be limited on the basis of the programme being offered in a further education and training setting and/or because it includes credits at NFQ Level 5.

6.3 Recognition of Qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 for Mobility

QQI will continue to offer advice to support the recognition of major and non-major awards for the purposes of mobility for study and employment.

This includes through our NARIC service and any global, regional or other recognition conventions to which Ireland might be a signatory.

It will also be delivered through our continued referencing of the NFQ to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area.

6.4 Recognition of Qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 for Employment

Employers, regulators and any other relevant stakeholders can continue to recognise qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 for the purposes of entry to the labour market, for employment and meeting of occupational standards.

¹⁴ www.naric.ie

7. IMPLEMENTATION

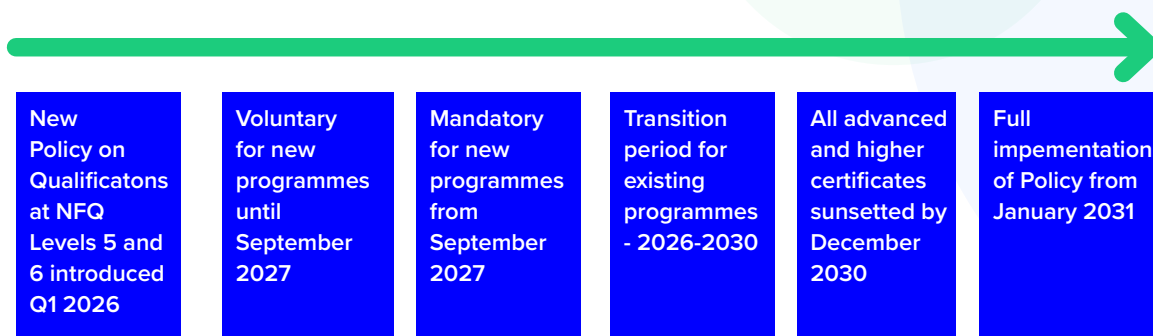
Providers and awarding bodies may voluntarily comply with this policy from its publication¹⁵.

However, this Policy will be fully implemented from September 2027 when all new programmes leading to awards at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 must comply with the provisions of this policy. Until this time Further Education and Training (FET) credit may be used for new programmes leading to awards at NFQ Levels 5 and 6. The award-type descriptors for the Advanced Certificate and Higher Certificate detailed in the Outline of the Structure of the National Framework of Qualifications may continue to be used.

Existing Advanced and Higher Certificates must be re-validated to the new award-type descriptor for the Level 6 Diploma by the end of 2030. No Advanced Certificates or Higher Certificates may be awarded after 2030. Learners enrolled in either the AC or HC in December 2030 will transfer to the Level 6 Diploma. Providers and awarding bodies must ensure that information provision to learners clearly explains this transition.

QQI will make arrangements for the transition of existing programmes leading to awards at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 to ECTS credits.

QQI will work in partnership with institutions and providers to build and sustain the capacity necessary for the effective implementation of this policy



¹⁵ Exact dates to be confirmed. Likely Q1 2026.

8. GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Articulation Arrangement	An articulation agreement is a defined agreed pathway between one programme and another programme offered by different providers. Completion of the initial programme by a learner is sufficient to facilitate the transfer.
Credit	A means of measuring, recognising and communicating the volume of learning associated with a qualification or programme. Usually associated with hours of notional learner effort.
Embedded Programme	An embedded programme is one which is integrated within a larger principal programme. It must be available for direct enrolment.
Embedded Award	An embedded award is available as an outcome of an embedded programme and should be considered a target award in its own right. Embedded awards can be both major and non-major awards and can accumulate to the achievement of the larger principal award.
European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)	The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a tool developed by the European Commission and used in the European Higher Education Area for making studies and courses more transparent. It helps students to move between countries and to have their academic qualifications and study periods abroad recognised. ECTS allows credits taken at one education institution to be counted towards a qualification studied for at another. ECTS credits represent learning based on defined learning outcomes and their associated workload.
Exit Award	An exit award is a qualification in its own right which is available on partial completion of a programme of study to which a learner has enrolled. It is usually not available for direct enrolment. Learners should be facilitated to re-enter at the point of exit should they seek to return to the programme.
Intermediate Qualification	<p>An intermediate qualification is a qualification in its own right but also contributes to a larger qualification at either a higher level of the NFQ or the same level. It can be designed as either an embedded or exit award.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postgraduate Diploma at NFQ Level 9 is an intermediate qualification towards the Master's Degree/ Bologna second cycle qualification. • Short Cycle qualification is an intermediate qualification of a Bachelors Degree/ Bologna First Cycle qualification. • The Level 5 Certificate is an intermediate qualification of the Level 6 Diploma/ short cycle qualification.

OUTLINE OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE IRISH NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS (NFQ) 2025

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Irish National Framework of Qualifications was first established in 2003 and was comprehensively described in the Determinations for the Outline of the NFQ published by National Qualifications Authority of Ireland.¹⁶ The statutory basis of the Framework was re-affirmed by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, and QQI was mandated to ‘keep and maintain’ the framework. The original Determinations are now out of date due to the introduction of an updated award-type descriptor for the Level 6 Diploma and are being retired and replaced by this policy.

This Policy is an interim policy designed to simply update the award-type descriptors for major awards following the Green Paper on (Intermediate) Qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6¹⁷ and the Green Paper on a Revised QQI Access, Transfer and Progression Policy¹⁸ and account for legislative changes. This Policy will be rescinded and replaced as part of the comprehensive review of the NFQ¹⁹ but will remain in force from its approval date until such time as it is rescinded.

2. STRUCTURE OF THE NFQ

The basic structure of the NFQ is based on levels. Each level has a specific level indicator. At each level in the Framework there is one, or more, award-types. Each award-type has its own award-type descriptor. It is the responsibility of QQI to develop these award-type descriptors. For each award-type a wide range of named awards have been developed. It is the responsibility of awarding bodies to develop named awards.

2.1. Levels and Level Indicators

The NFQ consists of 10 levels. The Framework levels set out a range of standards of knowledge, skill and competence. Eight sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence have been defined.

The sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence have been used to generate level indicators. Level indicators are broad descriptions of learning outcomes at a given level, in terms of the eight sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence. An overall NFQ level is defined by the complete set of strand indicators for that level. A Grid of Level Indicators has been developed and published.²⁰

¹⁶ [determinations.qxd](#)

¹⁷ [qqi-green-paper-on-intermediate-qualifications-at-nfq-levels-5-6-1.pdf](#)

¹⁸ [qqi-green-paper-on-qqi-s-access-transfer-and-progression-policy.pdf](#)

¹⁹ [programme-for-review-of-national-framework-of-qualifications-nfq-policies-future-proofing-the-nfq.pdf](#)

²⁰ [NFQ Grid Level Indicators.pdf](#)

The Grid shows how the outcomes in each of the sub-strands progress across the 10 levels. The level indicators support the inclusion of award-types at the appropriate level of the NFQ, based on the mix of learning outcomes.

2.2. Award-types

Award-types are central to the Framework. An award-type is a class of named awards sharing common features and level. At each level in the NFQ there is at least one award-type. Each award-type has its own award-type descriptor and for each award-type a wide range of named awards have been, and continue to be, developed.

QQI does not set the standards of the named awards of the Department of Education and the designated awarding bodies. However, it is through the award-types and their descriptors that these awards can be included in the Framework, as described in the Policies and Criteria for the Inclusion of Awards in the National Framework of Qualifications.²¹

The Framework is intended to enable the recognition of all learning achievements, and the range of award-types facilitates this inclusiveness. Accordingly, five classes of award-types have been determined.

- Major award-types
- Minor award-type
- Special purpose award-type
- Supplemental award-type
- Professional award-type

Some award-types fulfil a broader range of purposes, and these are labelled major award-types. Other, more limited or specialised learning needs are met by minor, supplemental and special-purpose award-types.

Award Type	Description
Major	The main class of award made at each level. It represents a significant number of learning outcomes.
Minor	All minor awards are linked to a major award which allows learners the opportunity to build on their minor awards and work towards gaining a major award. It is important to note that minor awards are achievements in their own right.
Special Purpose	Specific areas of learning that have a narrow scope.

²¹ [qp-24-core-policies-and-criteria-for-the-inclusion-of-awards-within-the-framework.pdf](#)

Supplemental	Learning which is additional to a previous award. They could, for example, relate to updating and refreshing knowledge or skills, or to continuing professional development.
Professional	These were developed to strengthen the capacity of the NFQ to resolve differences between levels of professional or occupation-oriented awards. The professional class implicitly introduced the concept that an award can have more than one class and type—e.g. a specific Honours Bachelor Degree award could be classed as both major and professional and would need to be consistent with the bachelor award-type as well as the professional award-type.

Table 1: Summary of award classes

2.3. Major award-types

The major award-types are outlined in the Table below.

NFQ Level	NFQ Major Award-Types
1	Level 1 Certificate
2	Level 2 Certificate
3	Level 3 Certificate Junior Certificate/Cycle
4	Level 4 Certificate
4/5	Leaving Certificate
5	Level 5 Certificate
6	Advanced Certificate Higher Certificate Level 6 Diploma
7	Ordinary Bachelor Degree
8	Higher Diploma Honours Bachelor Degree
9	Postgraduate Diploma Masters Degree
10	Doctoral Degree Higher Doctorate

Table 2: Major award-types for NFQ Levels 1-10

2.4. Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate

The Junior Certificate is no longer awarded and has been replaced by the Junior Cycle spanning NFQ Levels 1-3, but an updated award-type descriptor has not yet been developed. The legacy Junior Certificate was placed at NFQ Level 3.

The content below is an excerpt from the original Determinations of the NFQ and describes the original process for including the Junior and Leaving Certificates in the Framework.

Excerpt from original Determinations for the NFQ

The award-type descriptors for the Junior and Leaving Certificates are defined to enable inclusion of these awards in the Framework. These descriptors are indicative rather than prescriptive in their intent. For the purpose of inclusion in the Framework:

- The Junior Certificate is defined on the basis of published aims, objectives and outcomes associated with the Junior Certificate as an education programme, incorporating the full spectrum of options and subjects. These are consistent with the indicators at NFQ Level 3.
- The Leaving Certificate is treated as a single award incorporating the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), the Leaving Certificate Established and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). The published general aims, objectives and outcomes associated with the various Leaving Certificate options, in their totality, are consistent with indicators at NFQ Levels 4 and 5 so the award is viewed as involving learning outcomes and standards spanning these levels.

2.5. Differentiation of Further and Higher Education and Training

The delineation between further and higher education and the need to confirm the associated NFQ levels was repealed with the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999 and is not found in the successor Quality and Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 2012. The delineation in the 1999 Act was associated with the two separate awards councils: Further Education and Training Council (FETAC) and Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) which were dissolved as part of the establishment of QQI. The 2012 Act is silent on the difference between further and higher education awards.

A higher education institution is legally defined (under the HEA Act 2022²²) as being a provider delivering at least one programme leading to a major award included in the NFQ at NFQ Level 7 and above.

The Further Education and Training Act 2013²³ establishes the legislative framework for the governance and delivery of FET and the Education and Training Board Act 2013²⁴ includes FET as a function of ETBs.

²² [Higher Education Authority Act 2022](#)

²³ [Further Education and Training Act 2013](#)

²⁴ [Education and Training Boards Act 2013](#)

3. INCLUSION OF AWARDS IN THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 amended the 2012 Act to provide for a new process by which awards are included in the Framework. The inclusion of awards within the Framework is a regulatory process that determines if an award should be included within the Framework with reference to the requirements of the Act. Awards which are included within the National Framework of Qualifications are published on the Irish Register of Qualifications (IRQ)²⁵

The Policies and Criteria for the Inclusion of Awards in the NFQ²⁶ outline the process for how awards of different awarding bodies are formally included in the NFQ.

As outlined in the Act, the NFQ is a system of levels and types of awards based on standards of knowledge, skill or competence to be acquired by a learner to entitle the learner to an award at a particular level, and of the type concerned, within the Framework. As such only awards included in the Framework can be described in terms of NFQ Levels and/or award types. It is appropriate for providers of programmes leading to awards included in qualifications frameworks other than the Irish NFQ to describe their awards as comparable to a certain NFQ level, where such comparability is facilitated by recognition tools and supports.

²⁵ www.irq.ie

²⁶ [qp-24-core-policies-and-criteria-for-the-inclusion-of-awards-within-the-framework.pdf](#)

4. MAJOR AWARD-TYPE DESCRIPTORS

Level 1 Certificate

Title	Level 1 Certificate
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	1
Volume	Small
Knowledge - <i>Breadth</i>	Elementary knowledge
Knowledge - <i>Kind</i>	Demonstrable by recognition or recall
Know-how and skill - <i>Range</i>	Demonstrate basic practical skills, and carry out directed activity using basic tools.
Know-how and skill - <i>Selectivity</i>	Perform processes that are repetitive and predictable
Competence - <i>Context</i>	Act in closely defined and highly structured contexts
Competence - <i>Role</i>	Act in a limited range of roles
Competence - <i>Learning to Learn</i>	Learn to sequence learning tasks; learn to access and use a range of learning resources
Competence - <i>Insight</i>	Begin to demonstrate awareness of independent role for self
Progression and Transfer	Progression to programmes leading to a Level 2 Certificate or at a higher level if appropriate.
Articulation	

Level 2 Certificate

Title	Level 2 Certificate
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	2
Volume	Medium
Knowledge - Breadth	Knowledge that is narrow in range
Knowledge - Kind	Concrete in reference and basic in comprehension
Know-how and skill - Range	Demonstrate limited range of basic practical skills, including the use of relevant tools
Know-how and skill - Selectivity	Perform a sequence of routine tasks given clear direction
Competence - Context	Act in a limited range of predictable and structured contexts
Competence - Role	Act in a range of roles under direction
Competence - Learning to Learn	Learn to learn in a disciplined manner in a well-structured and supervised environment
Competence - Insight	Demonstrate awareness of independent role for self
Progression and Transfer	Progression to programmes leading to a Level 3 Certificate or at a higher level if appropriate.
Articulation	

Level 3 Certificate

Title	Level 3 Certificate
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	3
Volume	Large
Knowledge <i>- Breadth</i>	Knowledge moderately broad in range
Knowledge <i>- Kind</i>	Mainly concrete in reference and with some comprehension of relationship between knowledge elements
Know-how and skill <i>- Range</i>	Demonstrate a limited range of practical and cognitive skills and tools
Know-how and skill <i>- Selectivity</i>	Select from a limited range of varied procedures and apply known solutions to a limited range of practical problems
Competence <i>- Context</i>	Act within a limited range of contexts
Competence <i>- Role</i>	Act under direction with limited autonomy; function with familiar, homogenous groups
Competence <i>- Learning to Learn</i>	Learn to learn within a managed environment
Competence <i>- Insight</i>	Assume limited responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour
Progression and Transfer	Progression to programmes leading to a Level 4 Certificate or at a higher level if appropriate.
Articulation	

Junior Certificate

Title	Junior Certificate²⁷
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	3
Volume	Large
Knowledge <i>- Breadth</i>	Knowledge moderately broad in range
Knowledge <i>- Kind</i>	Mainly concrete in reference and with some comprehension of relationship between knowledge elements
Know-how and skill <i>- Range</i>	Demonstrate a limited range of skills and tools in various domains of activity – artistic, intellectual, scientific, physical and practical.
Know-how and skill <i>- Selectivity</i>	Choose from a limited range of varied procedures and apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems
Competence <i>- Context</i>	Act within a limited range of contexts
Competence <i>- Role</i>	Act under direction with limited autonomy; function with familiar, homogenous groups
Competence <i>- Learning to Learn</i>	Learn to learn within a managed environment
Competence <i>- Insight</i>	Assume limited responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour
Progression and Transfer	Progression to programmes leading to a Leaving Certificate. Progression to programmes leading to a Level 4 Certificate or at a higher level if appropriate.
Articulation	

²⁷ Please note that the Junior Certificate has since been replaced with the Junior Cycle spanning NFQ Levels 1-3 but an award type descriptor is not available.

Level 4 Certificate

Title	Level 4 Certificate
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	4
Volume	Large
Knowledge - <i>Breadth</i>	Broad range of knowledge
Knowledge - <i>Kind</i>	Mainly concrete in reference and with some elements of abstraction of theory
Know-how and skill - <i>Range</i>	Demonstrate a moderate range of practical and cognitive skills and tools.
Know-how and skill - <i>Selectivity</i>	Select from a range of procedures and apply known solutions for a variety of predictable problems
Competence - <i>Context</i>	Act in familiar and unfamiliar contexts
Competence - <i>Role</i>	Act with considerable amount of responsibility and autonomy
Competence - <i>Learning to Learn</i>	Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a supervised environment
Competence - <i>Insight</i>	Assume partial responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour
Progression and Transfer	Progression to programmes leading to a Level 5 Certificate or at a higher level if appropriate.
Articulation	

Leaving Certificate

Title	Leaving Certificate
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	4/5
Volume	Large
Knowledge - Breadth	Broad range of knowledge
Knowledge - Kind	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking with significant depth in some areas. Some underpinning theory.
Know-how and skill - Range	Demonstrate a moderate range of practical and cognitive skills and tools.
Know-how and skill - Selectivity	Select from a range of procedures and apply known solutions for a variety of predictable problems. Evaluate and use information to plan and develop investigative strategies.
Competence - Context	Identify and apply skill and knowledge to a moderately broad range of contexts. Take responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs.
Competence - Role	Exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities. Function within familiar homogenous groups.
Competence - Learning to Learn	Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a managed environment
Competence - Insight	Assume partial responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour
Progression and Transfer	Progression to programmes leading to a Level 5 Certificate, Level 6 Diploma, Ordinary Bachelor Degree or Honours Bachelor Degree
Articulation	

Level 5 Certificate

Title	Level 5 Certificate
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	5
Volume	Large
Knowledge - Breadth	Broad range of knowledge
Knowledge - Kind	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant underpinning theory
Know-how and skill - Range	Demonstrate a broad range of specialised skills and tools
Know-how and skill - Selectivity	Evaluate and use information to plan and develop investigative strategies and to determine solutions to varied unfamiliar problems.
Competence - Context	Act in a range of varied, and specific contexts taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs; identify and apply skill and knowledge to a wide variety of contexts.
Competence - Role	Exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities; join and function within multiple, complex and heterogenous groups
Competence - Learning to Learn	Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a managed environment
Competence - Insight	Assume full responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour
Progression and Transfer	Progression to a programme leading to a Level 6 Diploma, Ordinary Bachelor Degree or Honours Bachelor Degree
Articulation	It is possible to progress into Year 2 of a programme leading to a Level 6 Diploma as the Level 5 Certificate is an intermediate qualification of the Level 6 Diploma. It is possible to progress into Year 2 of a programme leading to an Ordinary Bachelor Degree or Honours Bachelor Degree where articular arrangements are in place or there is sufficient coherency of learning following an assessment.

Level 6 Diploma

Title	Level 6 Diploma
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	6
Volume	Large
Knowledge - <i>Breadth</i>	Specialised knowledge of a broad area
Knowledge - <i>Kind</i>	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant underpinning theory
Know-how and skill - <i>Range</i>	Demonstrate comprehensive range of specialised skills and tools
Know-how and skill - <i>Selectivity</i>	Formulate responses to well defined abstract problems
Competence - <i>Context</i>	Act in a range of varied, and specific contexts involving creative and non-routine activities; transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of contexts
Competence - <i>Role</i>	Exercise substantial personal autonomy and often taken responsibility for the work of others and/or for the allocation of resources; form and function within, multiple complex and heterogenous groups
Competence - <i>Learning to Learn</i>	Learn to evaluate own learning and identify needs within a structured learning environment; assist others in identifying training needs
Competence - <i>Insight</i>	Express an internalised, personal world view, reflecting engagement with others
Progression and Transfer	Progression to a programme leading to an Ordinary Bachelor Degree or to an Honours Bachelor Degree
Articulation	It is possible to progress into Year 2 or 3 of a programme leading to an Ordinary Bachelor Degree or to an Honours Bachelor Degree where articular arrangements are in place or there is sufficient coherency of learning following an assessment.

Advanced Certificate

Title	Advanced Certificate
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	6
Volume	Large
Knowledge <i>- Breadth</i>	Specialised knowledge of a broad area
Knowledge <i>- Kind</i>	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant depth in some areas
Know-how and skill <i>- Range</i>	Demonstrate comprehensive range of specialised skills and tools
Know-how and skill <i>- Selectivity</i>	Formulate responses to well defined abstract problems
Competence <i>- Context</i>	Utilise diagnostic & creative skills in a range of functions in a wide variety of contexts
Competence <i>- Role</i>	Exercise substantial personal autonomy and often taken responsibility for the work of others and/or for the allocation of resources; form and function within, multiple complex and heterogenous groups
Competence <i>- Learning to Learn</i>	Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a managed environment
Competence <i>- Insight</i>	Express an internalised, personal world view, reflecting engagement with others
Progression and Transfer	Transfer to a programme leading to a Higher Certificate. Progression to a programme leading to an Ordinary Bachelor Degree or to an Honours Bachelor Degree
Articulation	

Higher Certificate

Title	Higher Certificate
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	6
Volume	Large
Knowledge - <i>Breadth</i>	Specialised knowledge of a broad area
Knowledge - <i>Kind</i>	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant underpinning theory
Know-how and skill - <i>Range</i>	Demonstrate comprehensive range of specialised skills and tools
Know-how and skill - <i>Selectivity</i>	Formulate responses to well defined abstract problems
Competence - <i>Context</i>	Act in a range of varied and specific contexts, taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs; identify and apply skills and knowledge in a wide variety of contexts
Competence - <i>Role</i>	Exercise substantial personal autonomy and often taken responsibility for the work of others and/or for the allocation of resources; form and function within, multiple complex and heterogenous groups
Competence - <i>Learning to Learn</i>	Take initiative to identify and address learning needs and interact effectively in a learning group
Competence - <i>Insight</i>	Express an internalised, personal world view, reflecting engagement with others
Progression and Transfer	Transfer to a programme leading to an Advanced Certificate. Progression to a programme leading to an Ordinary Bachelor Degree or to an Honours Bachelor Degree
Articulation	

Ordinary Bachelor Degree

Title	Ordinary Bachelor Degree
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	7
Volume	Large
Knowledge - <i>Breadth</i>	Specialised knowledge across a variety of areas
Knowledge - <i>Kind</i>	Recognition of limitations of current knowledge and familiarity with sources of new knowledge; integration of concepts across a variety of areas
Know-how and skill - <i>Range</i>	Demonstrate specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills and tools across an area of study.
Know-how and skill - <i>Selectivity</i>	Exercise appropriate judgement in planning, design, technical and/or supervisory functions related to products, services, operations or processes
Competence - <i>Context</i>	Utilise diagnostic and creative skills in a range of functions in a wide variety of contexts
Competence - <i>Role</i>	Accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes; take significant or supervisory responsibility for the work of others in defined areas of work
Competence - <i>Learning to Learn</i>	Take initiative to identify and address learning needs and interact effectively in a learning group
Competence - <i>Insight</i>	Express an internalised, personal world view, manifesting solidarity with others
Progression and Transfer	Progression to a programme leading to a Higher Diploma or an Honours Bachelor Degree; Progression internationally to some second cycle degree programmes
Articulation	

Honours Bachelor Degree

Title	Honours Bachelor Degree
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	8
Volume	Large
Knowledge - <i>Breadth</i>	An understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to a field (or fields) of learning
Knowledge - <i>Kind</i>	Detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialised areas, some of it at the current boundaries of the field(s)
Know-how and skill - <i>Range</i>	Demonstrate mastery of a complex and specialised area of skills and tools; use and modify advanced skills and tools to conduct closely guided research, professional or advanced technical activity.
Know-how and skill - <i>Selectivity</i>	Exercise appropriate judgement in a number of complex planning, design, technical and/or management functions related to products, services, operations or processes, including resourcing
Competence - <i>Context</i>	Utilise advanced skills to conduct research or advanced technical or professional activity accepting accountability for all related decision making; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills in a range of contexts.
Competence - <i>Role</i>	Act effectively under guidance in a peer relationship with qualified practitioners; lead multiple, complex and heterogenous groups.
Competence - <i>Learning to Learn</i>	Learn to act in variable and unfamiliar learning contexts; learn to manage learning tasks independently, professionally and ethically.
Competence - <i>Insight</i>	Express a comprehensive, internalised personal world view manifesting solidarity with others.
Progression and Transfer	Transfer to programmes leading to the Higher Diploma at NFQ Level 8. Progression to programmes leading to Post-graduate Diplomas and Masters Degrees, or in some cases, to programmes leading to a Doctoral Degree. Progression internationally to second cycle degree programmes.
Articulation	

Higher Diploma

Title	Higher Diploma
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	8
Volume	Medium
Knowledge - <i>Breadth</i>	An understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to a field (or fields) of learning
Knowledge - <i>Kind</i>	Detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialised areas, some of it at the current boundaries of the field.
Know-how and skill - <i>Range</i>	Demonstrate mastery of a complex and specialised area of skills and tools; use and modify advanced skills and tools to conduct closely guided research, professional or advanced technical activity.
Know-how and skill - <i>Selectivity</i>	Exercise appropriate judgement in a number of complex planning, design, technical and/or management functions related to products, services, operations or processes, including resourcing
Competence - <i>Context</i>	Utilise advanced skills to conduct research or advanced technical or professional activity accepting accountability for all related decision making; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills in a range of contexts.
Competence - <i>Role</i>	Act effectively under guidance in a peer relationship with qualified practitioners; lead multiple, complex and heterogenous groups.
Competence - <i>Learning to Learn</i>	Learn to act in variable and unfamiliar learning contexts; learn to manage learning tasks independently, professionally and ethically.
Competence - <i>Insight</i>	Express a comprehensive, internalised personal world view manifesting solidarity with others.
Progression and Transfer	Progression to programmes leading to Post-graduate Diplomas and Masters Degrees, or in some cases, to programmes leading to a Doctoral Degree. Progression internationally to second cycle degree programmes.
Articulation	From an Ordinary or Honours Bachelor Degree into a new field of learning

Master's Degree

Title	Master's Degree
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	9
Volume	Large
Knowledge - <i>Breadth</i>	A systematic understanding of knowledge at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning
Knowledge - <i>Kind</i>	A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning.
Know-how and skill - <i>Range</i>	Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools and techniques of enquiry
Know-how and skill - <i>Selectivity</i>	Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning; develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques
Competence - <i>Context</i>	Act in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional levels and ill defined contexts
Competence - <i>Role</i>	Take significant responsibility for the work of individuals and groups; lead and initiative activity
Competence - <i>Learning to Learn</i>	Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development.
Competence - <i>Insight</i>	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and act to change them
Progression and Transfer	Progression to programmes leading to a Doctoral Degree, or transfer to another Masters Degree or Post-graduate Diploma.
Articulation	

Post-graduate Diploma

Title	Postgraduate Diploma
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	9
Volume	Medium
Knowledge - <i>Breadth</i>	A systematic understanding of knowledge at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning
Knowledge - <i>Kind</i>	A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning.
Know-how and skill - <i>Range</i>	Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools and techniques of enquiry
Know-how and skill - <i>Selectivity</i>	Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning; develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques
Competence - <i>Context</i>	Act in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional levels and ill-defined contexts
Competence - <i>Role</i>	Take significant responsibility for the work of individuals and groups; lead and initiative activity
Competence - <i>Learning to Learn</i>	Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development.
Competence - <i>Insight</i>	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and act to change them
Progression and Transfer	Transfer to programmes leading to a Masters Degree.
Articulation	May be exempted from part of a programme leading to a Masters Degree.

Doctoral Degree

Title	Doctoral Degree
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This is a multi-purpose award type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
Level	10
Volume	Large
Knowledge <i>- Breadth</i>	A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of a field of learning.
Knowledge <i>- Kind</i>	The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research, or other advanced scholarship, of quality to satisfy review by peers.
Know-how and skill <i>- Range</i>	Demonstrate a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials which are associated with a field of learning; develop new skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials.
Know-how and skill <i>- Selectivity</i>	Respond to abstract problems that expand and redefine existing procedural knowledge
Competence <i>- Context</i>	Exercise personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent contexts.
Competence <i>- Role</i>	Communicate results of research and innovation to peers; engage in critical dialogue; lead and originate complex social processes
Competence <i>- Learning to Learn</i>	Learn to critique the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts.
Competence <i>- Insight</i>	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and lead action to change them
Progression and Transfer	
Articulation	

Higher Doctorate

Title	Higher Doctoral Degree
Class of Award-Type	Major
Purpose	This award largely recognises excellent and distinguished contributions to learning. It may be used for career progression to advanced levels of academia and research.
Level	10
Volume	Large
Knowledge - <i>Breadth</i>	The systematic development of a large and coherent body of knowledge which is at the forefront of a field of learning.
Knowledge - <i>Kind</i>	The creation and interpretation of seminal knowledge, through original research, or other advanced scholarship, of quality to satisfy review by peers.
Know-how and skill - <i>Range</i>	Bring to publication the output of scholarly work in the production or application of knowledge in a form that admits to scholarly assessment
Know-how and skill - <i>Selectivity</i>	Respond to abstract problems that expand and redefine existing procedural knowledge
Competence - <i>Context</i>	Make a substantial and sustained contribution to the application of knowledge and skill, perhaps in novel contexts
Competence - <i>Role</i>	Acts as a recognised leading authority, influencing others in a field of learning over a period of time
Competence - <i>Learning to Learn</i>	Learn to critique the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts.
Competence - <i>Insight</i>	Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and lead action to change them
Progression and Transfer	None
Articulation	This award is never based on a provider's programme and, as such, is not subject to validation but is assessed by the awarding body for each individual learner. Normally, the learner already holds a first doctorate or equivalent for some period of time prior to becoming a candidate for the higher doctorate



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