HICA Study Visit

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Quality and Qualifications Ireland
The Presentation

• Quality and Qualifications Ireland

• A Framework of Qualifications – why?

• The Irish NFQ to date

• International Developments
Quality and Qualifications Ireland

- Established November 2012
- Amalgamation of former framework authority and the national further education and higher education quality assurance and awarding bodies
- A single agency responsible for external quality assurance (QA) processes across all levels of the national framework of qualifications (NFQ)
Functions of QQI

• The National Framework of Qualifications
• Setting award standards
• Making awards and validating programmes
• Delegating authority to make awards
• Quality assurance (review and improvement) of further and higher education and training
• Issuing QA Guidelines
• Authorising the International Education Mark
• Providing information on programmes and awards
• Qualifications recognition advice
QQI Roles

• Custodian of National Framework of Qualifications
  – developing national standards

• Qualifications Recognition
  – advice (NARIC)
  – within National Framework of Qualifications

• Quality assurance for all education and training outside schools including
  – all HEIs at institutional level
  – private HE at programme level
Irish National Framework of Qualifications

Intention:

‘The single, nationally and internationally accepted entity, through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way and which defines the relationship between all education and training awards’

QQI is responsible for promoting, maintaining, further developing, implementing and reviewing the NFQ
The Irish National Framework of Qualifications

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

AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK
- There are four classes of award in the National Framework of Qualifications:
  - **Major Awards**: named in the outer rings, are the principal class of awards made at a level
  - **Minor Awards**: are for partial completion of the outcomes for a Major Award
  - **Supplemental Awards**: are for learning that is additional to a Major Award
  - **Special Purpose Awards**: are for relatively narrow or purpose-specific achievement

For further Information consult:  www.nfq.ie  www.QQI.ie  ©QQI 2014
Overarching Qualifications Frameworks
A Framework of Qualifications – why?

• a coherent national policy approach to qualifications
• lifelong learning society
  • new kinds of work and career
  • need for a more flexible system of qualifications
  • need for portability of qualifications
• international comparison and alignment
  • European policy trends and agreements
  • Bologna (EHEA), European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
The Framework: a blueprint for change

- a new concept of a ‘qualification’, or an ‘award’:
- *an award is a recognition of learning outcomes*
  - *not a recognition of participation in a programme or in any particular learning process*
  - *many programmes may lead to the same award*
- many new awards, new titles, new terminology (not just a compendium of existing awards or mapping of existing awards)
- no distinction made between ‘education’ and ‘training’
Benefits of Qualifications Frameworks - 1

• Increased reliability of Qualifications
• Enhanced transparency for users of qualifications
• Broader range of learning forms recognised
• An external reference point for qualification standards
• Clarification of learning pathways
Benefits of Qualifications Frameworks - 2

- Increased portability of qualifications
- Platform for stakeholders to strengthen cooperation
- Support for national reform policies
- Stronger basis for international co-operation and understanding
The International Dimension: mobility

• A key objective in the legislation – to maximise mobility in lifelong learning society
• More diverse needs, focus on outcomes
• To be able to gain an award in different ways, e.g. by accumulating credit for learning outcomes over time
  • opportunity for entry – transparent, fair and consistent entry arrangements
  • clarity about relationships between awards, and about transfer / progression routes
  • accurate and reliable information
• a comprehensive strategy, published in October 2003: credit, progression routes, entry arrangements, information provision
European Meta-Frameworks

• Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (adopted by European Ministers, Bergen 2005) - the ‘Bologna Framework’
  – verification of compatibility with the Irish national framework – completed November 2006
  – One of first two countries doing this on a “pilot basis”
• European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (adopted by European parliament, April 2008) - the ‘EQF’
  – 8 levels, based on learning outcomes
  – Irish NFQ referenced to EQF in June 2009
• Key role of the Irish authorities in the development of both meta-frameworks
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQF levels</th>
<th>EHEA Framework (Bologna)</th>
<th>NFQ Levels</th>
<th>NFQ Major Award-types</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Level 1 Certificate</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Level 2 Certificate</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Level 3 Certificate, Junior Certificate</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Level 4 Certificate, Leaving Certificate</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Short Cycle within First Cycle</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Level 5 Certificate, Leaving Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>First Cycle</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Advanced Certificate (FET award); Higher Certificate (HET award)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Second Cycle</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ordinary Bachelors Degree</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Honours Bachelor Degree, Higher Diploma</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Masters Degree, Post-Graduate Diploma</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Third cycle</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Doctoral Degree, Higher Doctorate</td>
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</table>
NARIC Ireland Foreign Qualifications

NARIC Ireland provides advice on the academic recognition of a foreign qualification by comparing it, where possible, to a major award type and level on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). A comparability statement for each qualification listed is available for download.

Click here to see our "Guide to using the NARIC database".

If you are unable to locate a particular qualification, you may submit a query using the query form available here.

Search

Country

--All--

Type of Education

--All--

Search Clear

932 Qualifications

البكالوريوس / الليسانس Bachelor Degree
Irish Award Type: Honours Bachelor Degree
NFQ Level: 8
Country: Libya

شهادة الدراسة الثانوية العامة / الفرع العلمي (General Secondary School Certificate)
Irish Award Type: Leaving Certificate
NFQ Level: 4 / 5
Country: Syria

دبلوم السلوك الأول (Diplome d'Études de Premier Cycle)
Irish Award Type: Higher Certificate
NFQ Level: 6
Country: Tunisia

دبلوم
Irish Award Type: Higher Certificate
NFQ Level: 6
Country: Kuwait

دبلوم الدراسات العليا (Postgraduate Diploma)
Irish Award Type: Post-Graduate Diploma
NFQ Level: 9
Country: Syria

دثانوى تعليماتي وليكي / شهادة دورة ثانوي(Grade 12 Graduation Certificate)
Irish Award Type: Leaving Certificate
NFQ Level: 4 / 5
Country: Libya
The NFQ experience: notable features

- Framework is part of a broad reform of the system of qualifications
- New structures, new organisations
- Dual approach – legislation and consultation
- Framework contains new awards at all levels, but also many existing awards are included
- Key concepts – level, level indicators, award-type, award-type descriptors, named award
- All elements underpinned by quality assurance
- Compatible with and influencing related European and international developments.
Reflections/Conclusions

• Implementation is a long-term iterative process. Questions remain about the extent of the cultural shift: compliance-driven or a deeper cultural embrace?
• Significant work is entailed in aligning teaching, learning and assessment practice in all sectors of education and training
• Compromises may need to be re-visited
• Pace and scope of implementation may differ across sectors (schools, universities etc.)
• Debate is welcome
• The policy environment can change – flexibility needed
Further Information

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Thank You