

## **QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland)**

QQI is a state agency established by the [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#) with a board appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills. The QQI functions include those previously carried out by the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC); the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC); the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI).

### **About QQI Awards**

QQI awards are available at community learning centres, schools and colleges and some workplaces. To achieve a QQI Certificate at any level learners must complete a number of modules. These can be mixed and matched between the levels, and existing awards that a learner may have are also counted.

### **Level 1 & 2**

Level 1 and 2 Certificates meet the needs of a variety of people. This includes the young and old, as well as those with intellectual and other disabilities. In addition, Level 1 Certificates may be appropriate for adults returning to training, and learners with few or no previous qualifications. Each certificate comprises a number of components, often in basic literacy and numeracy.

Awarded by: Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

### **Level 3**

#### **Level 3 Certificate**

The Level 3 Certificate recognises specific personal and practical skills as well as knowledge and basic transferable skills.

Awarded by: QQI

#### **Junior Certificate**

The Junior Certificate is also a Level 3 award. Students generally continue their education and study for the Leaving Certificate or a Level 4 Certificate.

Awarded by: State Examinations Commission (Department of Education and Skills)

### **Level 4 & 5**

#### **Level 4 Certificate**

The Level 4 Certificate recognises vocational and personal skills, as well as knowledge and understanding to specified standards. Successful students may take up introductory vocational employment or go on to do a Level 5 Certificate.

Awarded by: QQI

#### **Level 5 Certificate**

The Level 5 Certificate are vocationally specific and require a general theoretical understanding. Once Level 5 is completed, the student can start working or apply for a range of higher education institutions and programmes.

Awarded by: QQI

#### **Leaving Certificate**

The Leaving Certificate is at Levels 4 and 5. It is the final course in the Irish secondary school system. It takes a minimum of two years preparation. This award may lead to further education.

Awarded by: State Examinations Commission (Department of Education and Skills)

## **Level 6**

### **Advanced Certificate**

An Advanced Certificate award enables learners to develop a comprehensive range of skills. These may be specific to a vocation or of a general supervisory nature. They also require detailed theoretical understanding. Modules include advanced vocational and occupational skills. Most people with Level 6 Advanced Certificates take up positions of employment.

Awarded by: QQI

### **Higher Certificate**

The Higher Certificate is generally takes two years to complete. Entry to a Higher Certificate programme is generally for school leavers as well as those with equivalent qualifications. A Higher Certificate holder at this level may continue to a programme on the next level of the framework.

Awarded by: Institutes of Technology, QQI and some Universities

## **Level 7**

### **Ordinary Bachelor Degree**

It generally takes three years of study to achieve an Ordinary Bachelor Degree. School leavers and those with equivalent qualifications may enter this programme. In addition, there are transfer arrangements in place across higher education as well as a number of programmes of one-year duration leading to the Ordinary Bachelor Degree for holders of the Higher Certificate.

Awarded by: Institutes of Technology, QQI and Universities

## **Level 8**

### **Honours Bachelor Degree**

The Honours Bachelor Degree is generally awarded after successfully finishing a three to four year course of education. However, there are longer programmes in areas such as architecture, dentistry and medicine. Entry is for school leavers and also for those with equivalent qualifications. In addition, there are transfer arrangements across higher education. Furthermore, there are a number of one-year programmes leading to Honours Bachelor Degrees for people with an Ordinary Bachelor Degree.

Awarded by: Institutes of Technology, QQI and Universities

### **Higher Diploma**

It normally takes one year's study to achieve a Higher Diploma. Most students need an Honours Bachelor Degrees to do a Higher Diploma study. However, holders of Ordinary Bachelor Degrees may also do a Higher Diploma. It is especially noteworthy that the Higher Diploma is typically in a different field than the initial award.

Awarded by: Institutes of Technology, QQI and Universities

## **Level 9**

### **Postgraduate Diploma**

The Postgraduate Diploma is normally awarded following completion of a programme of one-year duration. Entry is typically for those with Honours Bachelor Degrees but holders of Ordinary Bachelor Degrees may also apply. The Post-graduate Diploma is an intermediate qualification.

Awarded by: Institutes of Technology, QQI and Universities

### **Masters Degree**

There are two types of Masters Degree in Ireland. Firstly, there is the taught Masters Degree. This is awarded following the completion of a programme of one to two years duration. Entry to a programme leading to a taught Masters Degree is typically for holders of Honours Bachelor Degrees. In some cases, people with Ordinary Bachelor Degrees may be admitted. In addition there is the Research Masters Degree programmes, which typically last two years.

Awarded by: Institutes of Technology, QQI and Universities

## Level 10

### **Doctoral Degree**

You need an Honours Bachelor Degree to enter a doctoral programme. In some disciplines, a Masters Degree is also preferred. Doctoral programmes are between three and four years in duration.

Awarded by: Institutes of Technology, QQI and Universities

### **Higher Doctorate**

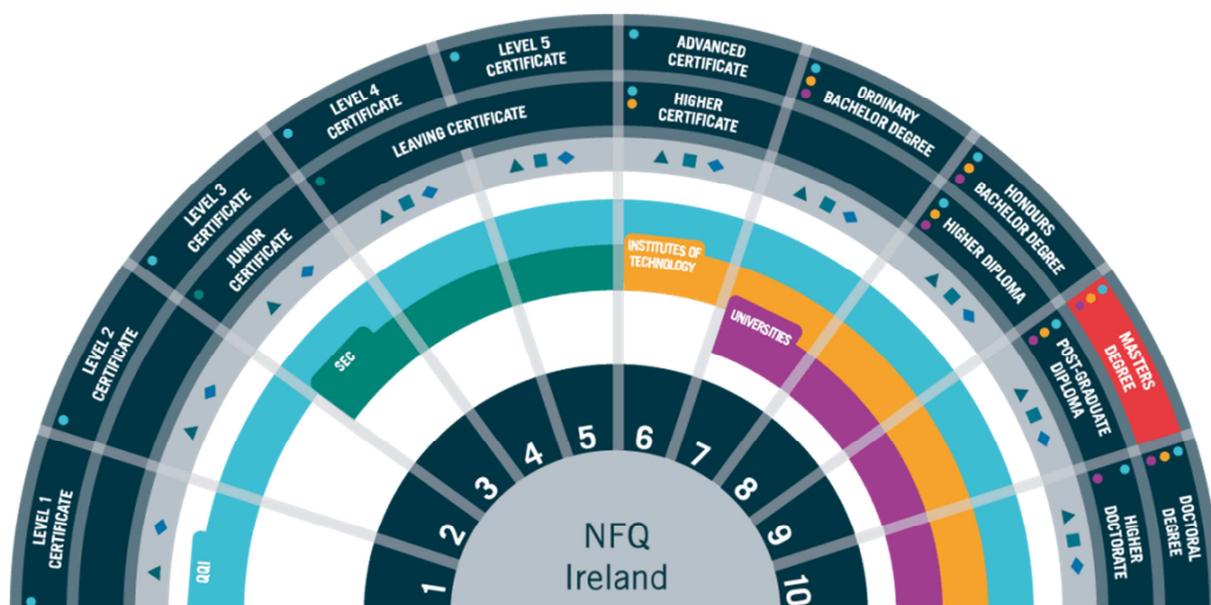
The High Doctorate award recognises excellent and distinguished contributions to learning. It is used for career progression to advanced levels of academia and research.

Awarded by: Institutes of Technology, QQI and Universities

## National Framework Of Qualifications (NFQ)

The NFQ is a ten level system that incorporates awards made for all kinds of learning, large and small, whether it is gained in schools, the workplace, the community, training centres, colleges or universities. School, further education (QQI awards) and higher education (DIT, University and HETAC awards) are all included. For instance, the Junior Certificate is at Level 3, apprenticeship qualifications are at Level 6, the Honours Bachelor Degree is at Level 8, the Doctoral Degree is at Level 10.

The levels provide learners with a flexible way of accessing and progressing educational opportunities. Access to levels is supported by recognition of prior learning and the fact that learners can attain and transfer credits to access courses. More importantly, learners can choose entry at a level and pace that suits their needs and interests and progress from there.



Ireland has collaborated with other countries to ensure that qualifications frameworks are connected. This means that there is a formally established relationship between the Irish NFQ and the European Qualifications Framework as well as the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area.

Information sourced from:

<http://www.adulteducationhandbook.com/>

<https://www.nightcourses.com/>