

Comparing Qualifications in Ireland and New Zealand: A Guide

Making Connections for You



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QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann



www.nzqa.govt.nz
www.QQI.ie

For more
Information

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide compares qualifications on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) and the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

By drawing broad comparisons between qualifications and where they sit on each framework, this guide aims to improve the transparency and understanding of qualifications in both jurisdictions, supporting the mobility of citizens between New Zealand and Ireland. It is an extension of a previous qualifications recognition arrangement completed in 2010.

In 2017, a working group between QQI and NZQA reviewed the arrangement and extended the comparison to include qualifications at all levels of the frameworks.

While the comparisons made in this guide do not entitle holders of qualifications from one country to claim automatic recognition in the other, they support transparent and consistent recognition decisions.*

- **Employers and job seekers** can use this guide to better understand qualifications in one country in comparison to the other.
- **Higher Education** providers and admissions staff can use this guide to facilitate recruitment of students between New Zealand and Ireland.



*There may be professional registrations requirements for some occupations and further entry requirements for study. Additional requirements should be verified with the relevant regulatory bodies and education institutions in Ireland and New Zealand.

A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) in December 2017 with the aim of developing a greater understanding of, and confidence in, each other's qualifications and their quality assurance.

QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland/ Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann (QQI) is responsible for the external quality assurance of post-secondary school education and training in Ireland and for promoting, developing and maintaining the Irish National Framework of Qualifications.

QQI hosts the Irish ENIC-NARIC centre advising on the recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland and about Irish qualifications abroad. The strategy of QQI aims to add value to qualifications.



NZQA

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority / Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa (NZQA) is responsible for managing the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, administering the secondary school assessment system, quality-assuring non-university tertiary education organisations, and qualifications recognition in New Zealand.

NZQA hosts New Zealand's National Education Information Centre which is responsible for providing information and advice on our education system and the recognition of international qualifications in New Zealand. We aim to ensure that New Zealand qualifications are valued as credible and robust.

MOC signing ceremony
between QQI and NZQA on
20 December 2017

THE IRISH NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS

The Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) is a framework through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way.

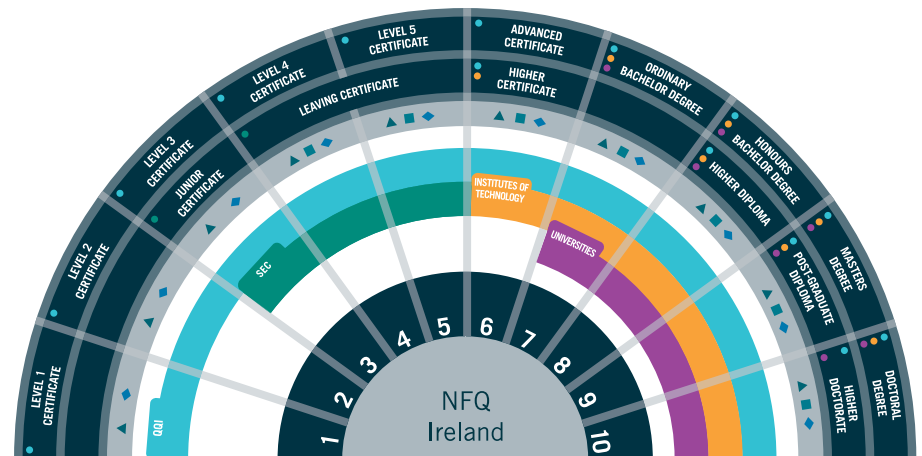
The different types and levels of qualifications included in the NFQ are organised based on their level of knowledge, skill and competence. As all NFQ qualifications are quality assured, learners can be confident that they will be recognised at home and abroad.

Quality assurance of the Irish NFQ

The quality assurance of education and training in Ireland is an ongoing process of evaluating the quality of an education system, institution or programme.

Providers are responsible for their internal quality assurance systems, and QQI is the external body ensuring that such systems are in place and that they are effective.

QQI issues quality assurance guidelines to providers, conducts regular evaluations, sets standards for qualifications, collects data on student completion rates, and engages in initiatives supporting the improvement of quality of education programmes.



For more detailed information about the NFQ, please visit our website: www.nfq.ie

THE NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The **New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF)** is the definitive source for accurate information about all quality assured qualifications in New Zealand.

The NZQF provides information about what knowledge and experience holders of qualifications can be expected to have. It is designed to optimise the recognition of educational achievement and to enhance confidence in the quality and international comparability of New Zealand qualifications.

Quality assurance of the NZQF

New Zealand operates a quality assurance system that is robust and affords public confidence in its qualifications. The effectiveness and quality of the NZQF are supported by a multi-layered and integrated quality assurance system.

NZQA and Universities New Zealand – Te Pūkai Tara follow the overarching rules set by NZQA for the quality assurance of qualifications and the tertiary education organisations that provide them. NZQA – which quality assures non-university Tertiary Education Organisations (TEOs) - and Universities New Zealand – which quality assures universities - use the same rules and criteria in their approach.

The processes of Academic Audit (universities) and External Evaluation and Review (non-university TEOs) assure quality in the university and non-university sectors respectively.

| LEVEL | QUALIFICATION TYPES |
|-------|---|
| 10 | Doctoral Degree |
| 9 | Master's Degree |
| 8 | Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates, Bachelor Honours Degree |
| 7 | Bachelor's Degree, Graduate Diplomas and Certificates |
| 6 | Diplomas |
| 5 | |
| 4 | Certificates |
| 3 | |
| 2 | |
| 1 | |

For more detailed information about the NZQF, please visit our website www.nzqa.govt.nz

USING QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORKS TO SUPPORT MOBILITY

QQI and NZQA used internationally defined principles of comparison and links to the European Qualification Framework to support the level-to-level comparison of the NFQ and the NZQF.

Internationally defined principles

To compare our frameworks, internationally defined principles were used to identify the similarities and differences between them.

As a result, QQI and NZQA are confident that:

- The roles and responsibilities of the two agencies are clear and transparent;
- There are links between the qualification levels of both frameworks;
- The frameworks are based on learning outcomes and the recognition of credit;
- The policies and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications on the frameworks are clear and transparent;
- Quality assurance is consistent with international quality assurance practice;
- The comparison outcomes for the levels have been verified by international experts.

The European Qualifications Framework

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is an overarching framework that links the qualifications systems of different countries.

The main role of the EQF is to make qualifications more understandable across different countries and systems. In this way, the EQF supports individual mobility and lifelong learning, helping those moving from one country to another to work, or to continue their education or training.

A level-to-level relationship has been established between the EQF and both the NZQF and the NFQ. QQI and NZQA have used this shared relationship to show how the levels of the Irish NFQ and NZQF compare.

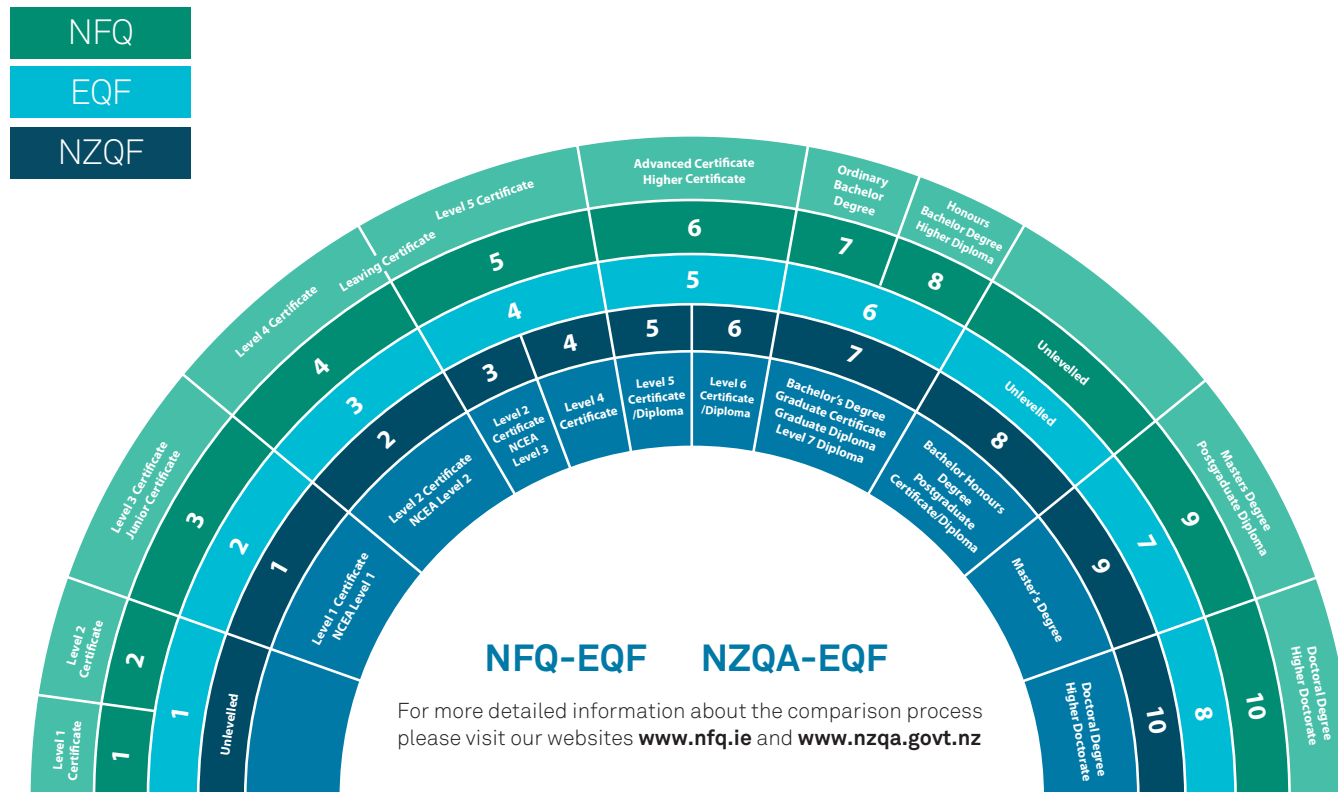
Recognition of Irish and New Zealand qualifications in either country will be informed by the level-to-level relationship in this guide but will not be confined to them.

Recognition decisions will be made with regard to the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the existing understanding of the qualifications, including progression opportunities, within and between each country.



RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE NFQ, THE NZQF AND THE EQF

The level-to-level relationship established between the NFQ and the NZQF, using the EQF as the key point of triangulation, makes it easier to see how Irish and New Zealand qualifications relate to each other.



Qualification Frameworks Supporting Mobility

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Qualifications are different between countries, but the level-to-level comparisons can give you an indication of how you can compare Irish and New Zealand qualifications using the frameworks.

SCHOOL

| Ireland | NFQ Level | EQF Level | NZQF Level | New Zealand |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|--------------|
| Junior Certificate | 3 | 2 | 1 | NCEA Level 1 |
| Leaving Certificate | 4 | 3 | 2 | NCEA Level 2 |
| | 5 | 4 | 3 | NCEA Level 3 |

NFQ Level 3 – NZQF Level 1

The NFQ Level 3 Junior Certificate is awarded to students who have successfully completed compulsory lower secondary education. In 2017, the Junior Certificate was replaced by Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

NCEA Level 1, sitting at NZQF Level 1 is the first of three secondary school qualifications and is generally completed in Year 11 after three years of secondary school.

Ireland

Schooling in Ireland is compulsory from ages 6 to 16 or until students have completed three years of secondary education. Secondary education consists of a three year Junior cycle followed by a two or three year Senior cycle. The JCPA is awarded to students who successfully complete the three year Junior cycle. At the end of Senior cycle, students take one of three programmes, each leading to a State Examination: the traditional Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) or the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA).

New Zealand

Schooling in New Zealand is compulsory from ages 6 to 16. Secondary school begins when students are 12 or 13 years old and runs for five years (Year 9 to Year 13). NCEA (National Certificate of Educational Achievement) is the main secondary school qualification offered at three levels. Students generally study for NCEA Level 1 in Year 11 and continue through Years 12 and 13 (Levels 2 and 3).

SCHOOL

NFQ Levels 4 / 5 – NZQF Level 2 and 3

The Irish Leaving Certificate is awarded following successful completion of upper secondary school education. The Leaving Certificate is treated as a single award incorporating the Leaving Certificate (Established), Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

The Leaving Certificate is placed across Levels 4 and 5 of the NFQ. Graduates of upper secondary school can progress to further or higher education programmes or into employment.

The NCEA Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications are listed on NZQF Level 2 and Level 3. NCEA Level 3 is generally completed in the final year of secondary school and is the highest school qualification on the NZQF. Graduates of both NCEA Level 2 and Level 3 may be eligible for entry into higher education in New Zealand. Students who have achieved NCEA Level 3 and have been awarded University Entrance are eligible to apply for university study.



TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Ireland

As well as the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) which gives greater emphasis to vocational subjects, there are further education and training awards sitting at NFQ Levels 1 to 6. These qualifications enable learners to gain recognition for vocationally specific skills and understanding.

New apprenticeship programmes span a wide range of industries and lead to qualifications at NFQ Levels 5-10. Traditionally craft apprenticeships are placed at NFQ Level 6.

New Zealand

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is part of secondary and tertiary education in New Zealand. Vocational Pathways at secondary school provide a wider range of learning opportunities and ways to achieve NCEA, and apprenticeships are an important pathway for vocational training.

TVET qualifications are integrated into the NZQF and usually range from Levels 1 to 6, although some providers offer TVET qualifications up to level 8 (such as postgraduate certificates and diplomas).

Comparing Framework Levels

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Comparison of VET Qualifications

| Ireland | NFQ Level | EQF | NZQF Level | New Zealand |
|----------------------|-----------|-----|------------|--|
| Level 3 Certificate | 3 | 2 | 1 | Certificate Level 1 |
| Level 4 Certificate | 4 | 3 | 2 | Certificate Level 2 |
| Level 5 Certificate | 5 | 4 | 3 | Certificate Level 3 |
| | | | 4 | Certificate Level 4 |
| Advanced Certificate | 6 | 5 | 5 | Certificate Level 5 Diploma Level 5 |
| | | | 6 | Certificate Level 6 Diploma Level 6 |

NFQ Level 3 – NZQF Level 1

The Irish NFQ Level 3 Certificate enables learners to gain recognition for specific skills, knowledge and achievements, allowing progression to the next level on the Irish NFQ.

The purpose of qualifications at NZQF Level 1 is to equip individuals with basic knowledge and skills for further learning and work. Qualifications at this level are pathways into Level 2 qualifications that build on the learning gained from Level 1.

NFQ Level 4 – NZQF Level 2

The Irish NFQ Level 4 Certificate enables learners to gain recognition for the achievement of vocational and personal knowledge, skills and competences.

The purpose of qualifications at NZQF Level 2 is to prepare individuals for further education and employment. Educational outcomes are pathways into Level 3 qualifications.

It was agreed that there is no comparable level on the NZQF to the Irish NFQ Levels 1 and 2. Certificates at these levels on the NFQ are designed to meet the needs of learners with few or no qualifications. Each certificate comprises a number of components which learners can achieve at their own pace.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

NFQ Level 5 – NZQF Level 3 and 4

The Irish NFQ Level 5 Certificate enables learners to develop a broad range of skills which are vocationally specific. This qualification allows progression to further and higher education and training programmes.

NZQF Level 3 and Level 4 are pivotal points on the framework. The school-leaving qualifications used for entry to tertiary education as well as vocational qualifications are held at Level 3. Level 4 holds the New Zealand trade qualifications that recognize the knowledge, skills and attributes required to be a registered tradesperson. Apprenticeships in New Zealand generally lead to a NZQF Level 4 qualification.



NFQ Level 6 – NZQF Level 5 and 6

The Irish NFQ Level 6 Advanced Certificate enables learners to develop a comprehensive range of vocational/occupational skills enabling holders to work independently (including self-employment) or progress to higher education and training.

NZQF Level 5 and 6 certificates and diplomas are the juncture between the upper end of technical and para-professional qualifications and the lower end of professional qualifications. Level 5 of the NZQF contains programmes which require sound knowledge of industry operations and a broad range of managerial skills to coordinate job operations.

Qualifications at NZQF Level 6 typically prepare students for a para-professional occupation and/or pathway programme to a Bachelor's Degree.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Ireland

Higher Education in Ireland is provided by Universities, Technological Universities, Institutes of Technology, and private higher education institutions. These institutions are awarding bodies in their own right, have Delegated Authority to make awards and offer QQI awards directly.

New Zealand

Higher (tertiary) education in New Zealand is provided by universities, institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs), wānanga and private training establishments (PTEs) and may be arranged by industry training organisations.

Higher, degree-level education is mainly offered at universities. Programmes are research-led and generally academic, as distinct from vocational. Vocational degree level education (which tends to be specific and applied) is offered at ITPs, wānanga and a few larger PTEs. PTE programmes are usually specific and vocational.

| Ireland | NFQ Level | EQF Level | NZQF Level | New Zealand |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|--|
| Higher Certificate | 6 | 5 | 5 | Certificate Level 5 Diploma Level 5 |
| | | | 6 | Certificate Level 6 Diploma Level 6 |
| Ordinary Bachelor Degree | 7 | 6 | 7 | Level 7 Diploma Bachelor's Degree Graduate Diploma Graduate Certificate |
| Honours Bachelor Degree | 8 | | | |
| | | | 8 | Bachelor Honours Degree Postgraduate Diploma Postgraduate Certificate |

HIGHER EDUCATION

NFQ Level 7 and 8 – NZQF Level 7

The Ordinary Bachelor Degree at NFQ Level 7 is three years duration with an exit award the (Higher Certificate at NFQ level 6) option after two years. These qualifications do not provide access to postgraduate programmes but to a programme on the next level on the Irish NFQ. The Irish Honours Bachelor Degree at NFQ Level 8 is awarded after three to four years of study and offers progression to postgraduate study. The Higher Diploma at NFQ Level 8 is normally awarded following one year of study. The typical entry level is an Honours Bachelor Degree at NFQ Level 8.

The purpose of qualifications at NZQF Level 7 is to prepare individuals for employment, mainly at the entry level for professional practice, and entry into postgraduate studies. It contains New Zealand's Bachelor's Degrees which are generally of three years' duration. Also at NZQF Level 7 are Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas, typically designed to enable degree graduates to pursue further study at an advanced undergraduate level or to progress to postgraduate study. Entry is open to degree graduates or those who can demonstrate equivalent practical, professional or education experience.



Comparing
Framework
Levels

QQI and NZQA have agreed to leave NZQF Level 8 unlevelled at this time.

NZQF Level 8 qualifications are postgraduate qualifications in New Zealand. However, NZQF Level 8 is not fully comparable with any particular level of the NFQ. It shares characteristics with NFQ Level 9 but is distinct from NFQ Level 7.

In line with the findings of the NZQA-EQF comparative analysis, QQI and NZQA have agreed that the most transparent outcome at this time is that NZQF Level 8 remains unlevelled.

HIGHER EDUCATION

| Ireland | NFQ Level | EQF Level | NZQF Level | New Zealand |
|--|-----------|-----------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| Masters Degree Postgraduate Diploma | 9 | 7 | 9 | Master's Degree |
| Doctoral Degree Higher Doctorate | 10 | 8 | 10 | Doctoral Degree Higher Doctorate |

NFQ Level 9 – NZQF Level 9

The Postgraduate Diploma at NFQ Level 9 is awarded following one year of study. The typical entry requirement is a Bachelor Degree. There are two types of Masters Degrees at NFQ Level 9 in Ireland: taught Masters Degrees awarded following one to two years of study and research Masters Degrees generally awarded following two years of study.

NZQF Level 9 holds the New Zealand Master's Degree. Master's Degrees usually build on a Bachelor's Degree, Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Diploma or Postgraduate Diploma. A Master's Degree can be by thesis, coursework, or a combination of coursework and thesis.

NFQ Level 10 – NZQF Level 10

Doctoral Degrees at NFQ Level 10 are awarded following typically four years of study. Entry requirements vary among institutions. The typical requirement is an Honours Bachelor Degree or a Masters Degree. The Higher Doctorate recognises excellent and distinguished contributions to learning. The entry requirement is first Doctoral Degree at NFQ Level 10 or equivalent. The Higher Doctorate may be used for career progression to advanced levels of academia and research.

Doctoral Degrees at NZQF Level 10 are research degrees where the individual becomes an increasingly independent scholar who makes a substantial and original contribution to knowledge. It is generally the culmination of study which begins at the bachelor level with the contribution to knowledge judged by independent experts. Higher Doctorates are awarded for independent work of special excellence, as judged by leading international experts, which is completed before a person makes an application to enrol for the degree. Individuals will normally be expected to have completed at least ten years of independent work and to have published extensively.

MAKE THE CONNECTION AND SEEK ADVICE ON TRAVELLING WITH YOUR QUALIFICATION

Ireland

NARIC Ireland
www.naric.ie

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
www.qqi.ie

Irish National Framework of Qualifications (Irish NFQ)
www.nfq.ie

Professional Qualifications Recognition
www.education.ie

New Zealand

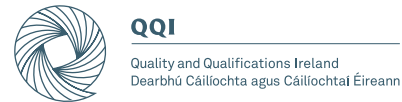
New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)
www.nzqa.govt.nz

Education New Zealand (ENZ)
www.enz.govt.nz

Universities New Zealand (UNZ)
www.universitiesnz.ac.nz

European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

European Commission - Learning opportunities and Qualifications
www.ploteus.eu



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