NQF-in
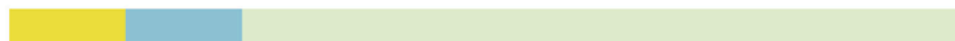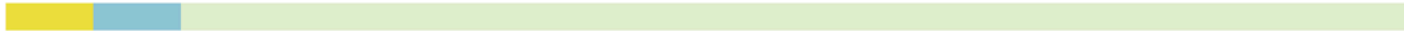
Developing organisational and financial models for including non-formal sector qualifications in National Qualifications Frameworks

'Non-formal qualifications' in the Irish NQF

Origins, changes and the major current challenge
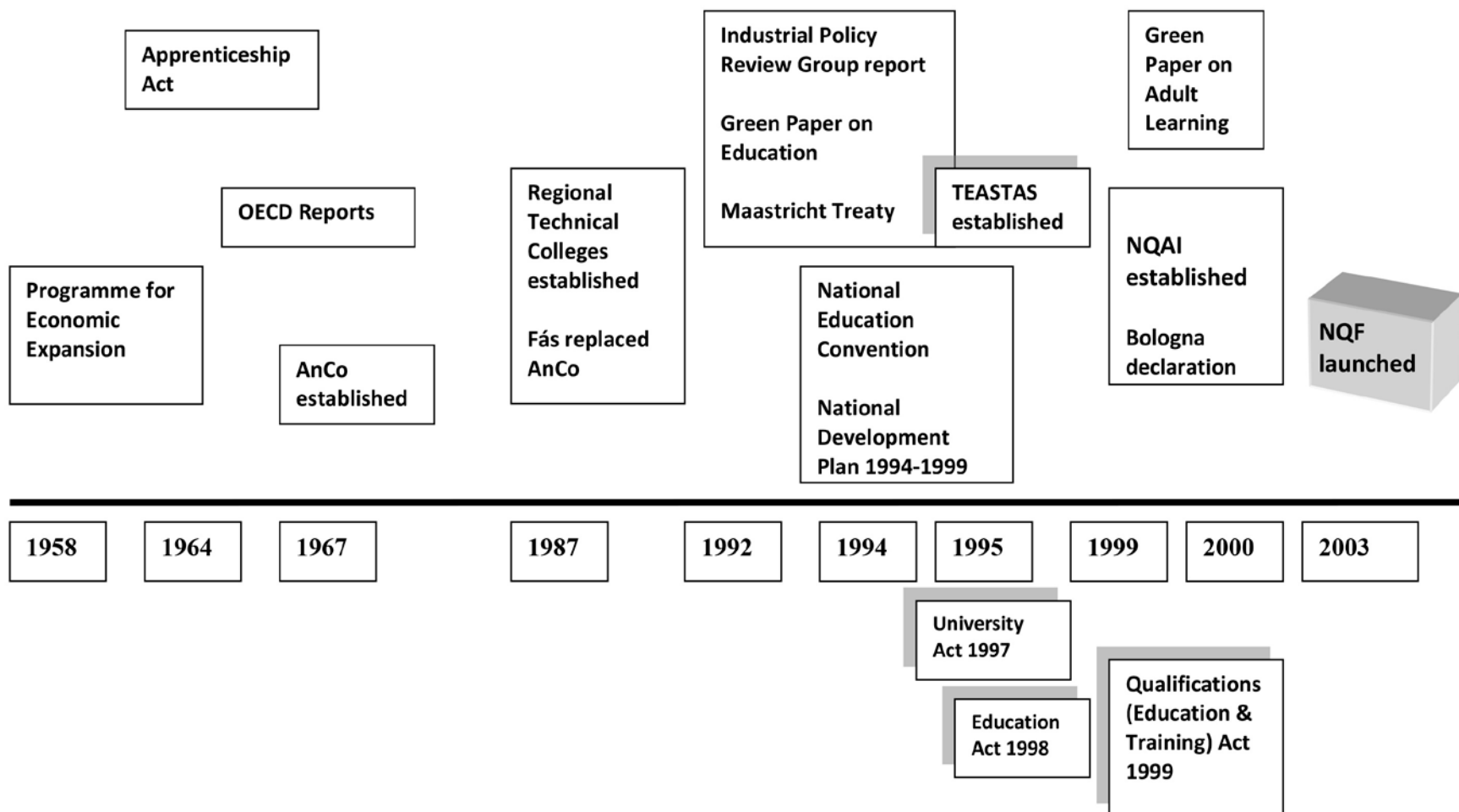
Prague, 9 November 2017

Dr Anne Murphy, Dublin Institute of Technology

(author of the Country Report for Ireland)

Part 1

- Origin and development

- Factors and forces that shaped the Irish NQF

- How qualifications/awards were placed on the NQF

- How the system worked up to the passing of the 2012 Act

ORIGINS – long phase of organic development (elaborated in the Country Report, Chapter 1)

Apprenticeship Act						Industrial Policy Review Group report Green Paper on Education Maastricht Treaty			Green Paper on Adult Learning

- OECD Reports
- Regional Technical Colleges established / Fás replaced AnCo
- TEASTAS established
- NQAI established / Bologna declaration
- Programme for Economic Expansion
- AnCo established
- National Education Convention / National Development Plan 1994-1999
- NQF launched

1958	1964	1967	1987	1992	1994	1995	1999	2000	2003

- University Act 1997
- Education Act 1998
- Qualifications (Education & Training) Act 1999

TEASTAS – the organisation that prepared the early groundwork for the NQF and which consulted stakeholders.

There was considerable emphasis on **lifelong learning** and on **adult education**, as well as on **integrated progression pathways**.

The **Qualifications (Education and Training Act) 1999** established the NQF with two new awarding bodies outside of the autonomous awarding bodies – **HETAC** (higher education and training awards council, for levels 6 -10) and **FETAC** (the further education and training awards council, for levels 1 - 6).

The **Department Education and Skills** continued to be responsible for state examinations at second level.

Universities and the **DIT** remained largely autonomous.

NQAI (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland) active and NQF launched by 2003.

NQF-in

Developing organisational and financial models for including non-formal sector qualifications in National Qualifications Frameworks

**Higher Education and
Training Awards Council**
Comhairle na nDámhachtainí
Ardoideachais agus Oiliúna

FETAC
Comhairle na nDámhachtaini
Breisoideachais agus Oiliúna
Further Education and
Training Awards Council

AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
**OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS**

D·I·T

UCD DUBLIN

National University of Ireland, Galway
Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh

Maynooth University
National University
of Ireland Maynooth

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

The task of 'placing' existing qualifications/awards on the new NQF

The Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) was broadly designed to 'make sense' of qualifications/awards in the state and to establish their inter-relationship with regard to types, titles, levels and size, in a transparent and easily readable format.
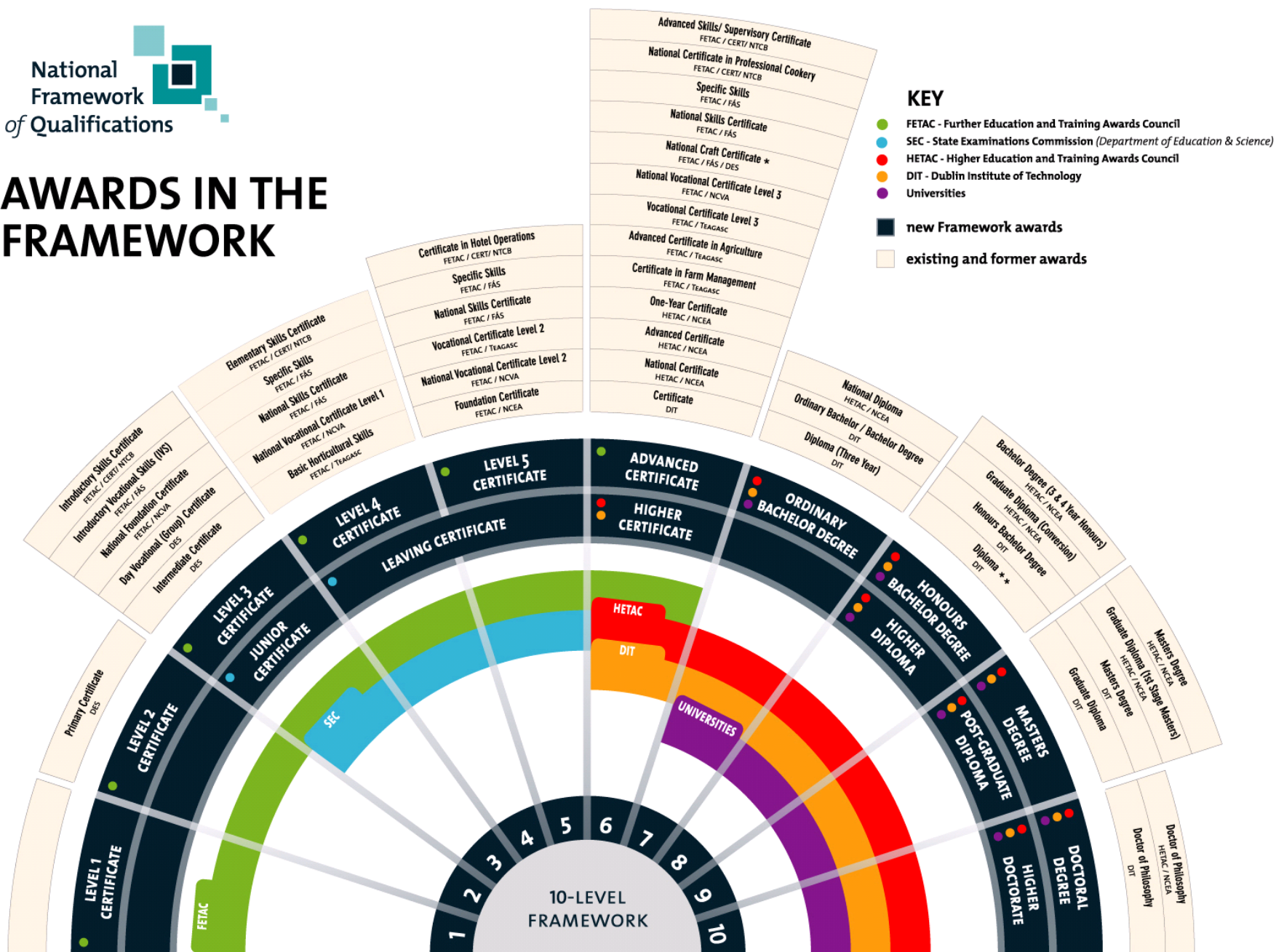
An early task was to 'place' existing qualifications/awards on the new framework.

It is clear that there is considerable 'bunching' of exiting awards at Level 6 where further education overlaps with higher education.

The DIT, and Institutes of Technology under HETAC, were permitted to offer Level 6 awards. Universities were encouraged to offer from Level 7 upwards.

Universities were not 'obliged' to include their awards in the framework initially, but were expected to co-operate with its development.

National Framework of Qualifications

AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK

KEY

- ● FETAC - Further Education and Training Awards Council
- ● SEC - State Examinations Commission *(Department of Education & Science)*
- ● HETAC - Higher Education and Training Awards Council
- ● DIT - Dublin Institute of Technology
- ● Universities

■ new Framework awards

□ existing and former awards

Level awards (outer ring labels)

Advanced Skills/ Supervisory Certificate
FETAC / CERT/ NTCB

National Certificate in Professional Cookery
FETAC / CERT/ NTCB

Specific Skills
FETAC / FÁS

National Skills Certificate
FETAC / FÁS

National Craft Certificate *
FETAC / FÁS / DES

National Vocational Certificate Level 3
FETAC / NCVA

Vocational Certificate Level 3
FETAC / TeagASC

Advanced Certificate in Agriculture
FETAC / TeagASC

Certificate in Farm Management
FETAC / TeagASC

One-Year Certificate
HETAC / NCEA

Advanced Certificate
HETAC / NCEA

National Certificate
HETAC / NCEA

Certificate
DIT

Certificate in Hotel Operations
FETAC / CERT / NTCB

Specific Skills
FETAC / FÁS

National Skills Certificate
FETAC / FÁS

Vocational Certificate Level 2
FETAC / TeagASC

National Vocational Certificate Level 2
FETAC / NCVA

Foundation Certificate
FETAC / NCEA

Elementary Skills Certificate
FETAC / CERT/ NTCB

Specific Skills
FETAC / FÁS

National Skills Certificate
FETAC / FÁS

National Vocational Certificate Level 1
FETAC / NCVA

Basic Horticultural Skills
FETAC / TeagASC

Introductory Skills Certificate
FETAC / CERT/ NTCB

Introductory Vocational Skills (IVS)
FETAC / FÁS

National Foundation Certificate
FETAC / NCVA

Day Vocational (Group) Certificate
DES

Intermediate Certificate
DES

Primary Certificate
DES

National Diploma
HETAC / NCEA

Ordinary Bachelor / Bachelor Degree
DIT

Diploma (Three Year)
DIT

Bachelor Degree (3 & 4 Year Honours)
HETAC / NCEA

Graduate Diploma (Conversion)
HETAC / NCEA

Honours Bachelor Degree
DIT

Diploma **
DIT

Graduate Diploma (1st Stage Masters)
HETAC / NCEA

Graduate Diploma
DIT

Masters Degree
HETAC / NCEA

Masters Degree
DIT

Doctor of Philosophy
HETAC / NCEA

Doctor of Philosophy
DIT

Inner framework wheel

LEVEL 5 CERTIFICATE
LEVEL 4 CERTIFICATE
LEVEL 3 CERTIFICATE
LEVEL 2 CERTIFICATE
LEVEL 1 CERTIFICATE
LEAVING CERTIFICATE
JUNIOR CERTIFICATE

ADVANCED CERTIFICATE
HIGHER CERTIFICATE
ORDINARY BACHELOR DEGREE
HONOURS BACHELOR DEGREE
HIGHER DIPLOMA
MASTERS DEGREE
POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA
HIGHER DOCTORATE
DOCTORAL DEGREE

HETAC
DIT
UNIVERSITIES
FETAC
SEC

10-LEVEL FRAMEWORK

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

TYPES OF QUALIFICATIONS/AWARDS

MAJOR awards are the award titles, levels and sizes named in the NQF diagram.

In addition there are minor, special-purpose and supplemental awards:

Summary of minor, special purpose and supplemental award-types

- **minor** award-types provide recognition for learners who achieve a range of learning outcomes, but not the specific combination of learning outcomes required for a major award. This recognition will have relevance in its own right

- **special-purpose** award-types are made for specific, relatively narrow, purposes — for example, the Safe Pass certification of competence in health and safety in the construction industry

- **supplemental** award-types are for 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

The Irish NQF **pre-dated** both the Dublin Descriptors and the EQF-LLL.

Alignment with the EHEA/Bologna system and EQF-LLL is illustrated in the table and figure following below.

NQF-in

Developing organisational and financial models for including non-formal sector qualifications in National Qualifications Frameworks

EQF Levels	EHEA Framework (Bologna)	Irish NFQ Levels	Irish NFQ Major Award-types
1		1	Level 1 Certificate
		2	Level 2 Certificate
2		3	Level 3 Certificate, Junior Certificate
3		4	Level 4 Certificate, Leaving Certificate
4		5	Level 5 Certificate, Leaving Certificate
5	Short Cycle within First Cycle	6	Advanced Certificate (FET award)* Higher Certificate (HET award)
6	First Cycle	7	Ordinary Bachelors Degree
		8	Honours Bachelor Degree, Higher Diploma
7	Second Cycle	9	Masters Degree, Post-Graduate Diploma
8	Third Cycle	10	Doctoral Degree, Higher Doctorate

Qualifications Frameworks - Going Global

Enhancing the transparency, quality and mobility of qualifications, nationally and internationally.

SHORT CYCLE

FIRST CYCLE

SECOND CYCLE

THIRD CYCLE

QF-EHEA

EQF

NFQ

- 4
- 3
- 2
- 5
- LEVEL 5 CERTIFICATE
- LEVEL 4 CERTIFICATE
- LEVEL 3 CERTIFICATE
- JUNIOR CERTIFICATE
- LEVEL 2 CERTIFICATE
- LEVEL 1 CERTIFICATE
- LEAVING CERTIFICATE
- ADVANCED CERTIFICATE
- HIGHER CERTIFICATE
- ORDINARY BACHELOR DEGREE
- HONOURS BACHELOR DEGREE
- HIGHER DIPLOMA
- MASTERS DEGREE
- POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA
- DOCTORAL DEGREE
- HIGHER DOCTORATE
- 6
- 7
- 8
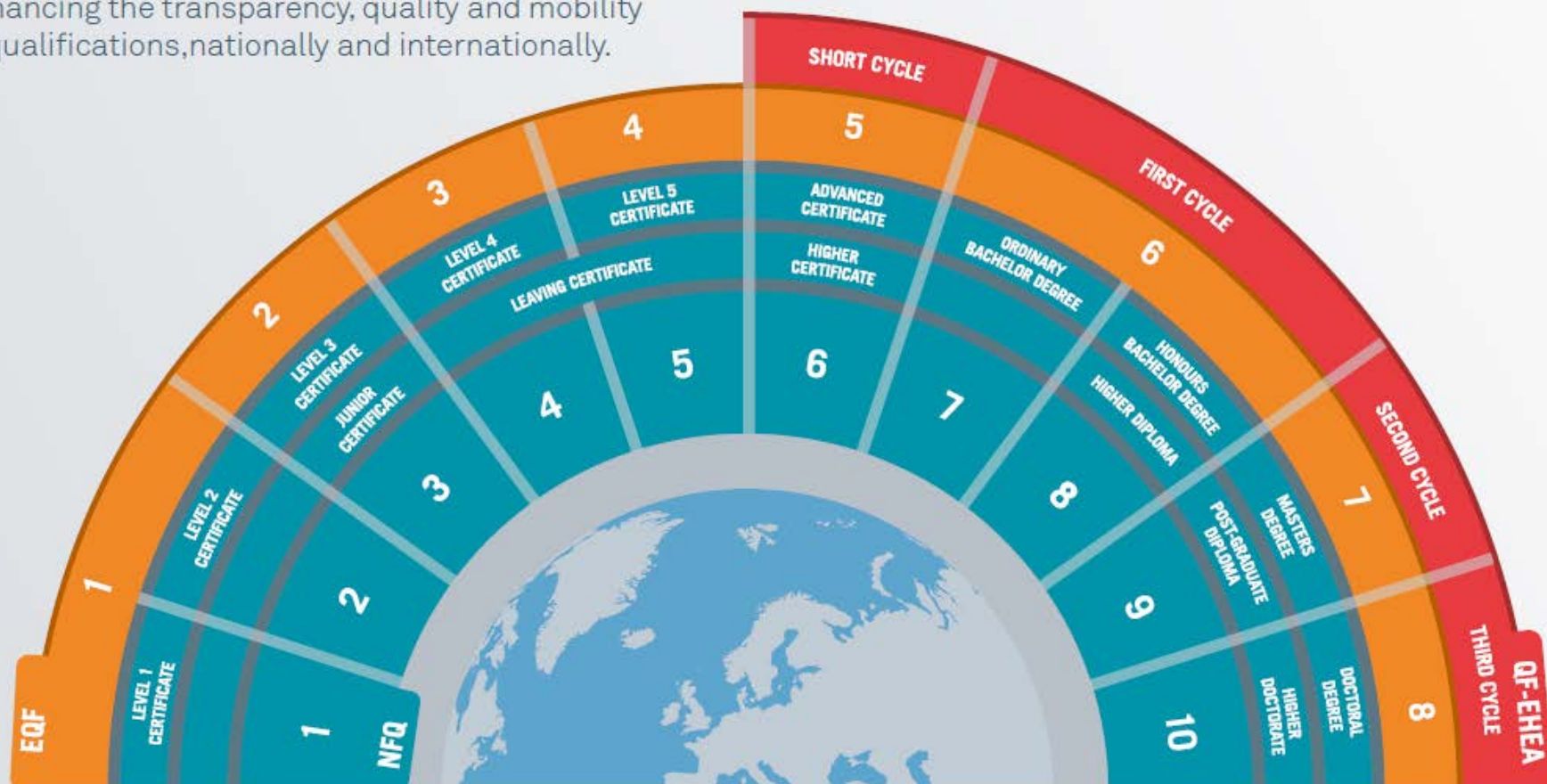
- ● NFQ — Irish National Framework of Qualifications
- ● EQF — European Qualifications Framework
- ● QF-EHEA — Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area

European Qualifications Framework

EUROPEAN Higher Education Area

National Framework of Qualifications

For further information consult: www.nfq.ie   www.QQI.ie

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Supported by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

PART 2

- How the **2012 Act** changed the process of including non-formal qualifications/awards in the NQF through QQI

- How 'non-formal' qualifications/awards, and non-formal 'provider' are defined

- Procedures for inclusion of non-formal providers and non-formal qualifications in the NQF through QQI

- Fees for 'inclusion'

- Proposed amendments to the 2012 Act

Changes to the law

Number 28 of 2012

QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE
(EDUCATION AND TRAINING) ACT 2012

QQI AWARD
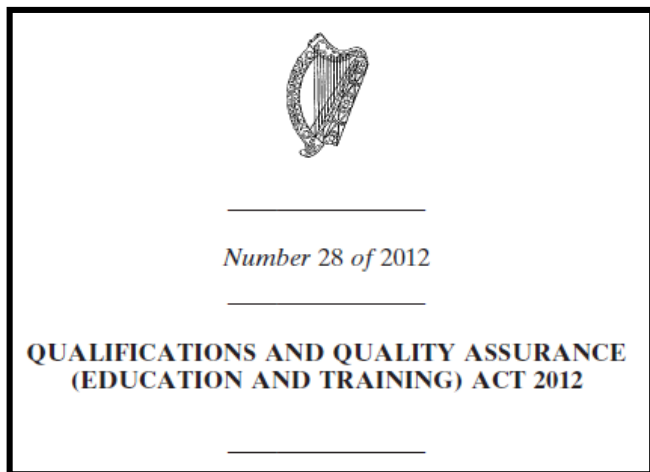
The major change was that both FETAC and HETAC were disbanded and a new entity **Qualifications and Quality Ireland (QQI)** took their place as *both* QA oversight and awarding body for qualifications outside the school system and publicly-funded higher education providers.

Role of QQI:

i.   QA body

ii. Awarding Body

iii. Maintaining the NQF

iv. Recognising foreign
    qualifications

v. Managing the IEM.

Summary of QQI services

NQF-in Developing organisational and financial models for including non-formal sector qualifications in National Qualifications Frameworks

Overview of our services

Quality Assurance
- Develop quality assurance guidelines
- Approve providers' quality assurance procedures
- Validate programmes
- Monitor and review providers

Qualifications
- Set standards for education and training
- Award qualifications and issue certificates
- Enable access, transfer and progression
- Recognise qualifications

The National Framework of Qualifications
- Maintain the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) as a system of relating different qualification levels to one another
- Promote and develop the NFQ
- Support the implementation of the NFQ

Recognition
- Advise on recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland
- Advise on recognition of Irish qualifications abroad

International Education Mark and the Code of Practice
- Establish a code of practice for providers offering courses to international learners
- Authorise the use of the International Education Mark (IEM) by providers (authorisation will start following revision of legislation).

National Framework of Qualifications

NFQ Ireland

LEVEL 5 CERTIFICATE
ADVANCED CERTIFICATE
LEVEL 4 CERTIFICATE
HIGHER CERTIFICATE
LEAVING CERTIFICATE
ORDINARY BACHELOR DEGREE
LEVEL 3 CERTIFICATE
JUNIOR CERTIFICATE
HONOURS BACHELOR DEGREE
HIGHER DIPLOMA
LEVEL 2 CERTIFICATE
INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY
UNIVERSITIES
MASTERS DEGREE
POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA
SEC
LEVEL 1 CERTIFICATE
QQI
HIGHER DOCTORATE
DOCTORAL DEGREE

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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

European Qualifications Framework

For further Information consult: www.nfq.ie   www.QQI.ie

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QQI definitions of 'non-formal' sector providers (*outside of state-supported providers*)

- Community/voluntary sector organisations
- Employers/work-based learning providers, including trade unions
- Hospital centres for nurse education
- Private providers – colleges
- Private providers – companies
- Private providers – individuals
- Public service agencies (other than BIM, Fáilte Ireland and Teagasc)
- Sectoral Representative Bodies
- Skillnets
- Training for people with disabilities
- Youth services.

After the 2012 Act, all **existing** providers were required to **re-engage** with QQI.

The **re-engagement process** involved having the provider's quality assurance arrangements approved to QQI standards. Thereafter programmes leading to awards could be submitted to QQI and validated for delivery.

Any **new provider** was obliged to undergo **initial engagement** with QQI as a provider and have its quality assurance arrangements approved before applying for validation of a programme leading to a QQI award.

All providers of programmes leading to QQI awards in the state that are within the NQF are obliged to engage in a 'lifecycle of provider engagement' as illustrated in the figure below.

Procedures for inclusion
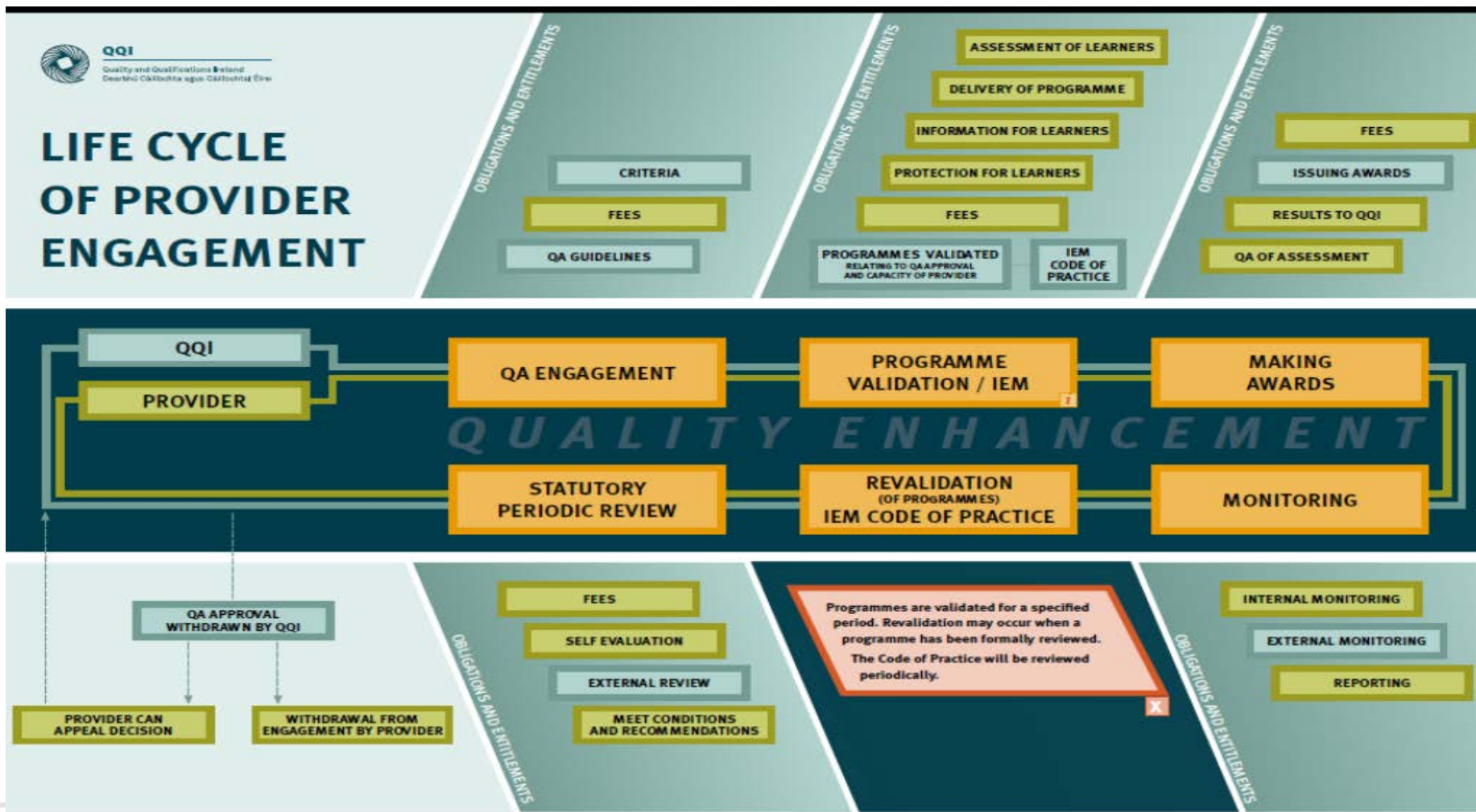
Procedures for inclusion of awards/qualifications offered by 'non-formal' independent and private providers are set out in a series of QQI publications and accompanying templates/forms which are published on the QQI website.

'Non-formal' providers should take account of both 'CORE' statutory QA guidelines and *'Statutory guidelines developed by QQI for independent/private providers coming to QQI on a voluntary basis'* – both dated April 2016.

NQF-in
Developing organisational and financial models for including non-formal sector qualifications in National Qualifications Frameworks

Provider Map to Using QQI Statutory QA Guidelines

POLICY

CORE

MODULES

QQI POLICY ON STATUTORY QA GUIDELINES
Published December 2014

CORE STATUTORY QA GUIDELINES

SECTOR SPECIFIC STATUTORY QA GUIDELINES

TOPIC SPECIFIC STATUTORY QA GUIDELINES

1

2

3

Policy sets out:

» QQI design and development of QA guidelines

» International influences

» Scope of QA guidelines

All providers must ensure that their QA procedures are informed by the Core Statutory QA Guidelines.

The Core QA Guidelines are:

» Fundamental, common requirements

» Applicable to ALL providers

» Informed by European Standards and Guidelines

Providers should have regard to the Sector Specific Statutory QA Guidelines as appropriate.

The Sector Specific Statutory QA Guidelines are:

» More detailed or specific guidelines to some providers

» Regulatory guidelines for particular categories of provider

Providers should have regard to the Topic Specific Statutory QA Guidelines as appropriate.

The Topic Specific Statutory QA Guidelines are:

» Additional guidelines on specific areas beyond the core

» May or may not apply to individual providers

QQI INITIATIVES ~ ENHANCEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Events | Activities | Publications

Core

Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines
Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers

April 2016/QG1-V1 © QQI

Independent/Private

Sector Specific Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines
Statutory QA Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/ Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis

April 2016/QG2-V1 © QQI

'Ownership' of qualifications/awards

In general, the providers who develop programmes leading to awards and who pay for approval of them, retain 'ownership' of them: they do not become public property.

There is one major variation with regard to 'ownership': **The Common Award System**

The CAS (Common Awards System) is a system of linked FET (Further Education and Training) awards specifications/standards at NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Levels 3 to 5 inclusive, which was introduced in 2014.

The CAS specifications include **awards standards** to be achieved before an award is made.

The awards standards are expressed as **minimum expected learning outcomes**. These reflect the knowledge, skill and competence to be achieved by the learner before an award is made.

There are around **1,600 active award specifications** in the CAS available on the QQI database.

Providers can use the Common Award Standards to design new programmes in popular fields such as Early Childhood Education, or Health & Safety.

Statistics about 'Inclusion' in the QQI online data-base **QSearch** (NOT a REGISTER as such) – **on 31 October 2017**

1978 QQI awards for 1 – 6

5712 programmes leading to awards in the NGF

102	Level 1
86	Level 2
492	Level 3
695	Level 4
2579	Level 5
1322	Level 6
81	Level 7
164	Level 8
135	Level 9

(Level 10 – Doctorate – not regarded as a programme)

573 providers to the NQF

979 NARIC Ireland Foreign qualifications 'recognised'.

The costs of including qualifications/awards in the NQF have two dimensions:

1. The **costs** of 'engaging' with QQI in the 'lifecycle of engagement'. This involves all administrative salaries and academic costs, which will depend on the scale of the provider's activities. Costs also include maintaining an appropriate data management system for student records etc.

2. **Fees** that must be paid to QQI for specific services at specific stages in the lifecycle of engagement.

QQI Fees for 'inclusion'

through approval of provider's

QA procedures

QQI, July 2014

QQI
Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Schedule of Fees

Determined by QQI, with the consent of the Minister for Education and Skills and the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform - Section 80 2012 Act

1.1 Fees for the submission of quality assurance procedures for approval in respect of new providers (Section 80 (a))

Fee	Applicability
€10,000	Fee for new providers of Higher Education and Training (HET) programmes.
€5,000	Fee for new providers of Further Education and Training (FET) programmes.

Note: The applicable progamme validation fee will also be payable. See 1.2 below.

1.2 Fees for an application for validation of a programme (Section 80 (e))

1.2.1 Standard Validation

Fee	Applicability
€10,000	Fee for higher education and training programmes leading to major awards and non-major awards with 60 credits or more
€5,000	Fee for higher education and training programmes leading to non-major awards with less than 60 credits
€2,000	Fee for further education and training programmes leading to major awards and to special purpose, supplemental or component awards with **50% or more** of the credit value of a major award
€1,000	Fee for further education and training programmes leading to special purpose, supplemental or component awards with **less than 50%** of the credit value of a major award

NQF-in

Developing organisational and financial models for including non-formal sector qualifications in National Qualifications Frameworks

QQI fees for **review and validation** of programmes

Note 1: A single validation fee may apply where an application comprises one or more programmes in the same field of learning. Where a validation visit extends beyond one day an additional fee of 50% will be payable.

1.2.2 Fee for the devolved validation process

The fee in respect of programmes validated under the devolved validation process will be charged at 50% of the standard fee.

1.2.3 Fee for validation of a programme leading to a Joint Award

The fee in respect of the validation of programmes leading to joint awards will be charged at not less than 50% of the main fee, but with the possibility of it equalling the full fee, in accordance with the particular circumstances and specifically to the complexity involved.

1.2.4 Fee for overseas validation

All overseas validations will be charged at full cost, to include travel and subsistence for panel members and members of the QQI executive.

1.3 Fee for the review and continuing validation of a programme (Section 80 (f))

Fee	Applicability (Note 1)
€1,500 minimum	Fee for providers of Higher Education and Training *and* Further Education and Training programmes. A charge of €1,500 will apply to the first programme, with an additional fee of €500 for each additional programme, subject to a maximum of €5,000 for each suite of programmes reviewed in a single programmatic review event.[1]

Note 1: This fee is for reviews conducted under a process managed by the provider. QQI may decide that a *de-novo* validation is required on the expiry of the validation of a programme. In the event that the review leading to the revalidation of a programme, or suite of programmes, is conducted by QQI, the fee applicable to the validation of a programme under Section 44 will apply.

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[1] The term suite of programmes is used to describe the programmes in a single unit or department, or in a field of learning.

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QQI Fees for **making an award**

1.4 Fees for the making of awards by QQI (Section 80 (g))

Type of Award	Fee
Major awards	
Level 1 3	Zero
Level 4*	€50
Level 5*	€50
Level 6*	€80
Component awards	
Level 1 - 3	Zero
Level 4*	€20
Level 5 & 6*	€20
Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards	
Level 1 - 3	Zero
Level 4*	€40
Level 5 & 6*	€40
Higher Certificate	€100
Ordinary Bachelor Degree	€150
Honours Bachelor Degree	€200
Higher Diploma	€200
Post-graduate Diploma	€200
Masters Degree	€200
Doctoral Degree	€200
Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental awards	€50

*Waivers in respect of further education and training award (certification) fees are available to social welfare recipients and/or medical card holders. Providers should have a procedure to verify that a learner satisfies the exemption criteria and should retain this evidence. Waivers also apply to learners at certain centres, i.e Youthreach and VTOS centres

1.5 Fees for the making of Joint Awards (Section 80 (h))

Fees in respect of the making of joint awards will be not less than 50% of the fee for QQI awards. See Section 1.4 above. In some circumstances, the fee may equal that of a QQI award. The specific circumstances will be taken into consideration when determining an appropriate fee.

3 Practical ways that non-formal providers can become 'included' in the NQF.

1. Negotiating directly with higher education providers in the design of programmes leading to awards using the QA status of the HE provider and paying appropriate costs for development, delivery, assessment and certification. This is sometimes referred to informally as 'linked' provision.

2. Forming **consortia** of smaller providers to reduce costs.

3. Designing programmes leading to awards that are **'aligned'** to the requirement of the NQF but not actually included in it. However, the status of 'aligned' qualifications has been suspended by QQI.

Proposed amendments to the 2012 Act

The 2012 Act was found to be inadequate for QQI to fully regulate all qualifications/awards in the state. Thus a series of amendments are proposed to the law which are currently being processed by Government.

Of relevance to **NQF-In** is the amendment related to the concept of 'awards recognised within the framework' which is **not supported with sufficient operational mechanisms** for QQI as the competent authority to define and implement a complete 'recognition' and 'inclusion' service.

It is hoped that the amendment will give QQI more comprehensive powers to open the framework to a wider range of non-formal qualifications available in the state.

Thank you for your attention!

Go raigh maith agaibh!

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