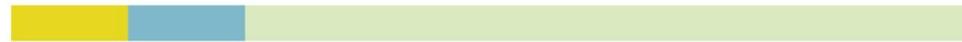


NQF-in



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

NQF-in

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

FINAL CONFERENCE 5-6 June 2018 WARSAW

Developing models of the inclusion of non-formal sector qualifications in national qualifications frameworks – the experience of European countries

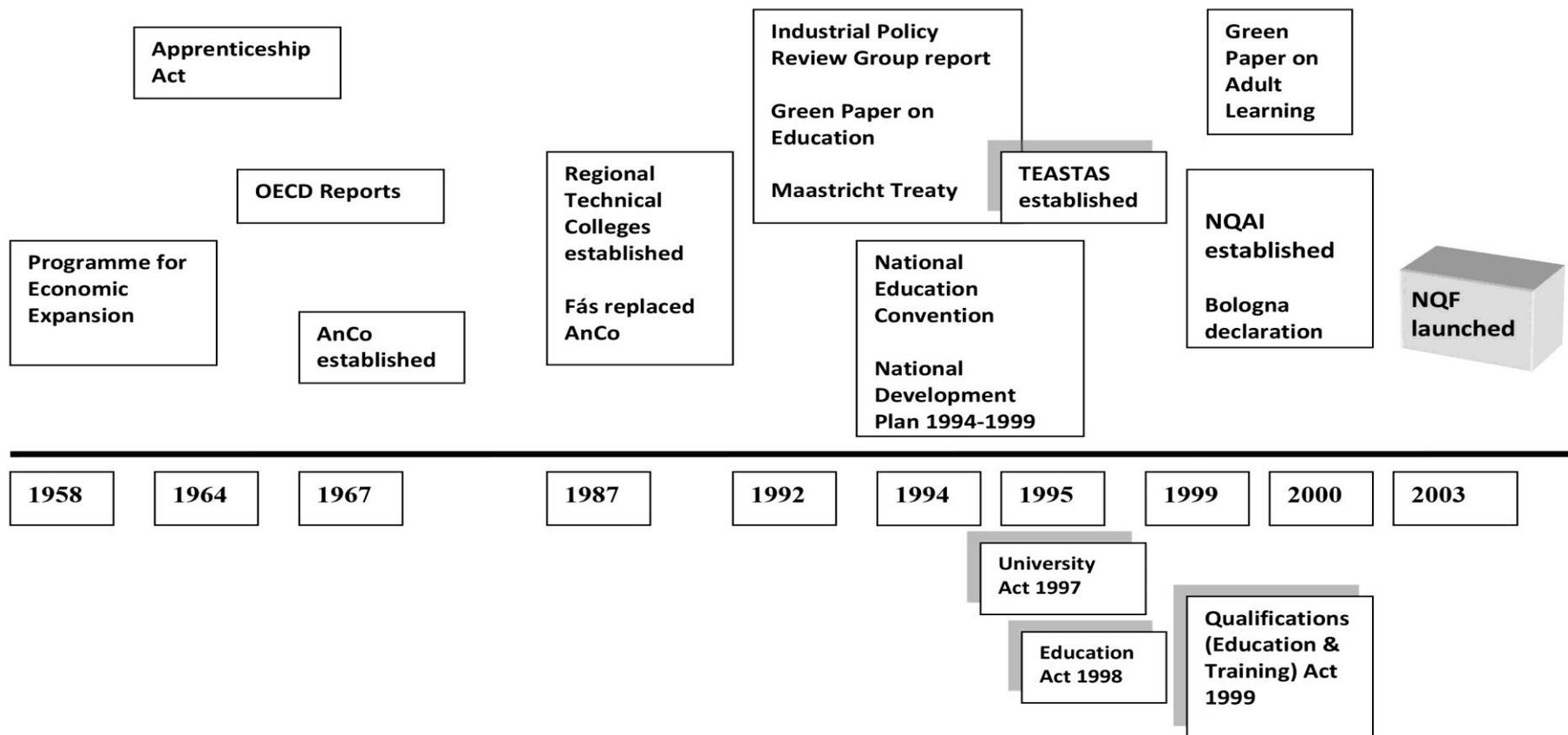
Working Group Session 1: IRELAND – a country with a long NQF tradition

Dr Anne Murphy, Dublin Institute of Technology

Contents:

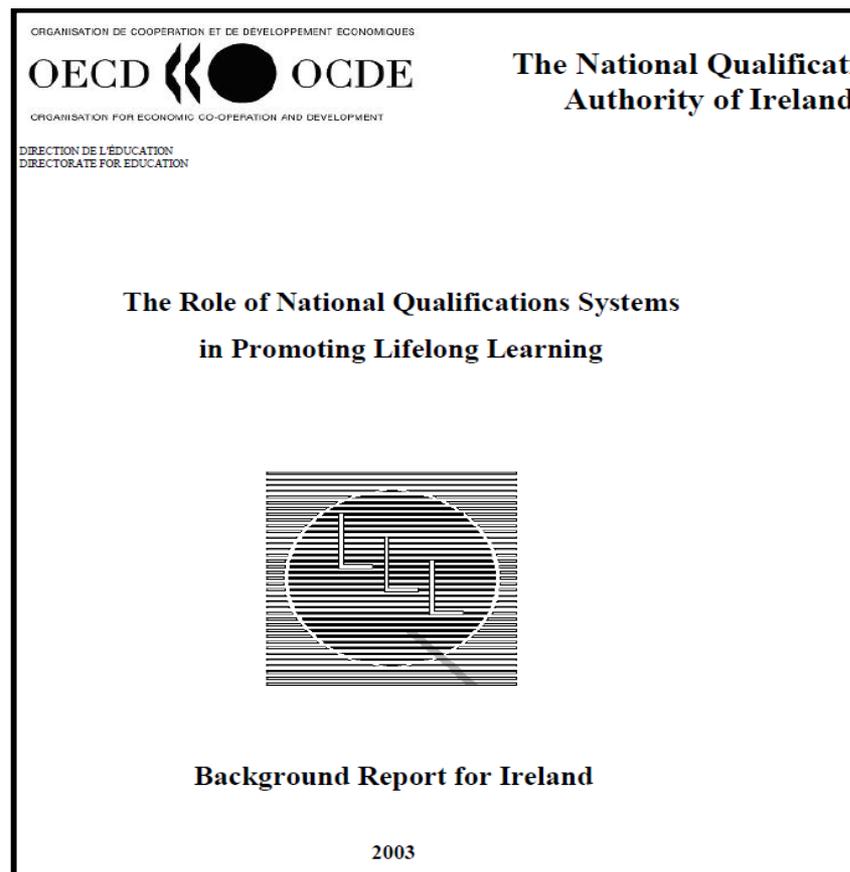
1. A short account of the development and structure of the Irish NQF
2. Characteristics of the Irish NQF based on the NQF-IN Report **Table 1 pages 8/9**
3. Characteristics for inclusion of qualifications based on models in **Section 4**
4. **‘Solutions’ in Section 5**

Development Phase – multiple influencing factors (Country Report for Ireland)



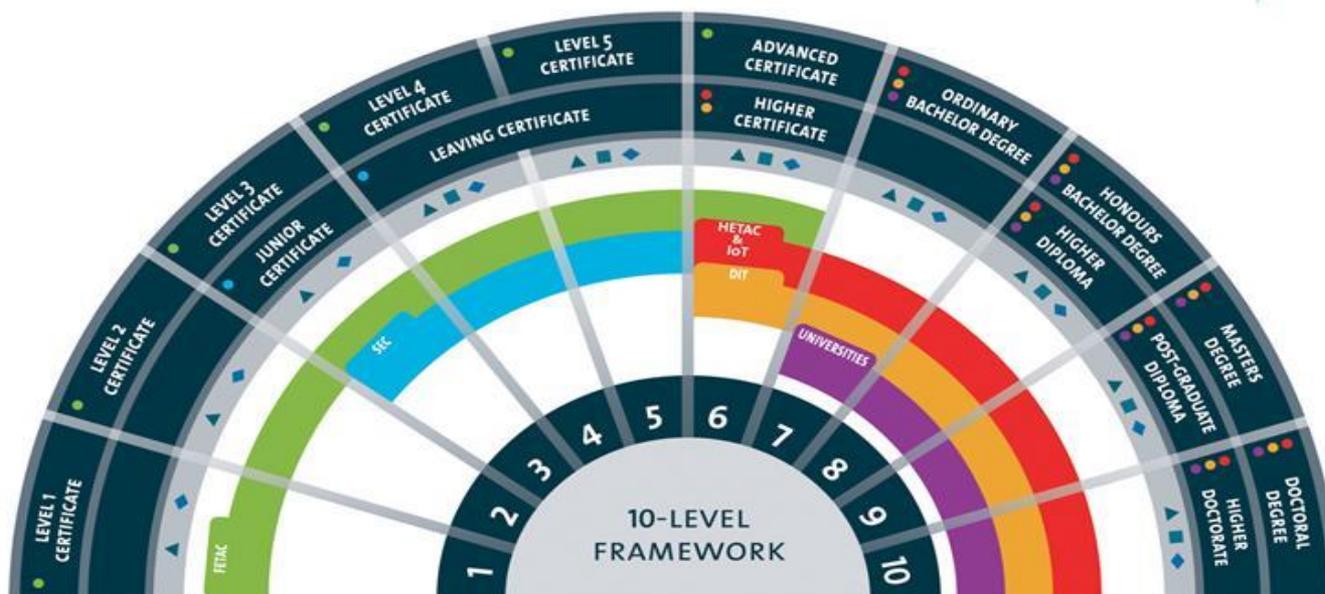


Higher Education and
Training Awards Council
Comhairle na nDámhachtainí
Ardoideachais agus Oiliúna



NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS

Údarás Náisiúnta
Cáilíochtaí na hÉireann
National Qualifications
Authority of Ireland



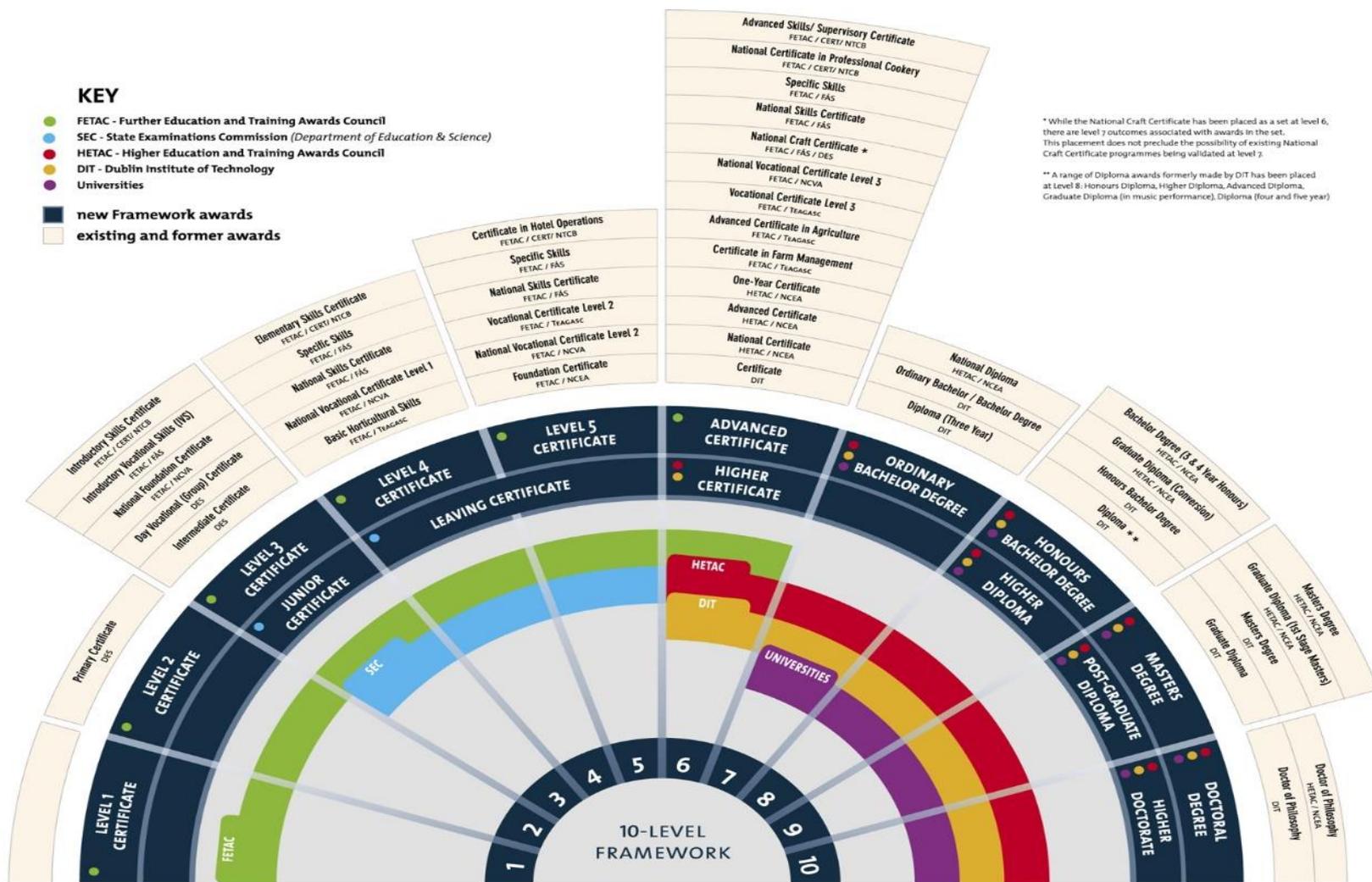
AWARDING BODIES

- FETAC - Further Education and Training Awards Council
- SEC - State Examinations Commission (Department of Education & Science)
- HETAC - Higher Education and Training Awards Council
- IOT - Institutes of Technology (make their own awards at specified levels under Delegated Authority from HETAC)
- DIT - Dublin Institute of Technology
- Universities

AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK

There are four types of award in the National Framework of Qualifications:

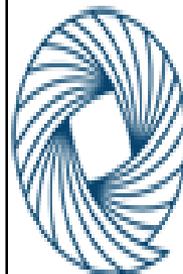
- Major Awards: are the principal class of awards made at a level
- ▲ Minor Awards: are for partial completion of the outcomes for a Major Award
- Supplemental Awards: are for learning that is additional to a Major Award
- ◆ Special Purpose Awards: are for relatively narrow or purpose-specific achievement





Number 28 of 2012

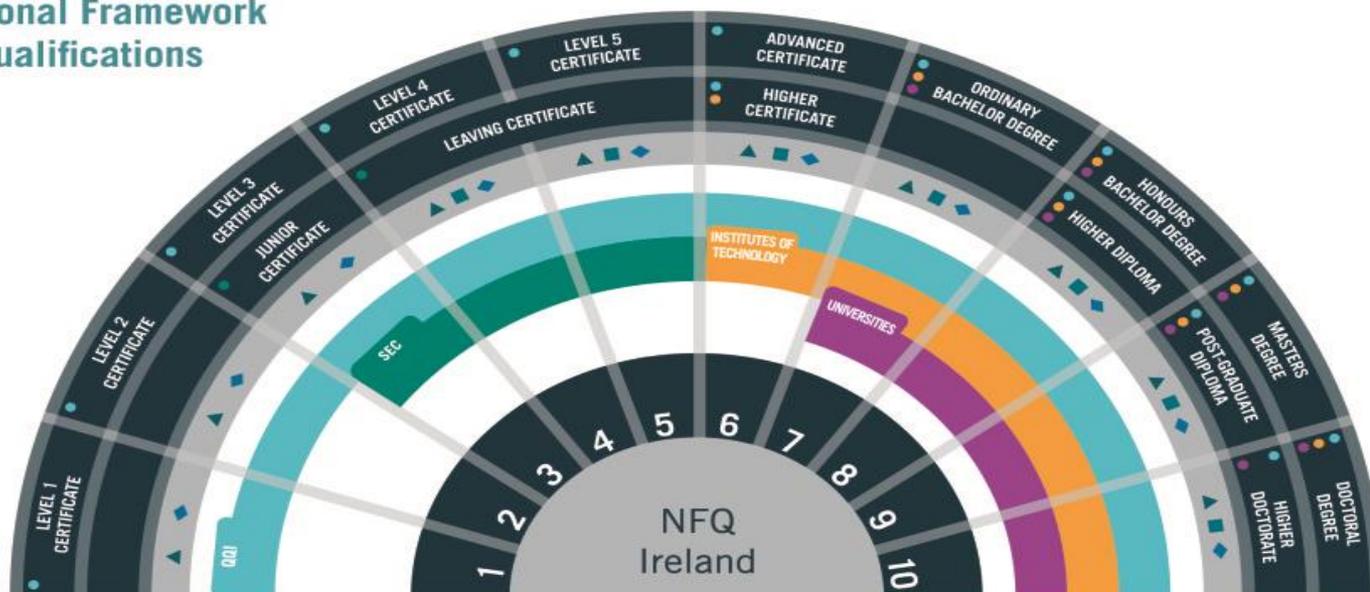
**QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE
(EDUCATION AND TRAINING) ACT 2012**



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

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



QQI

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QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann



National Framework of Qualifications





QQI

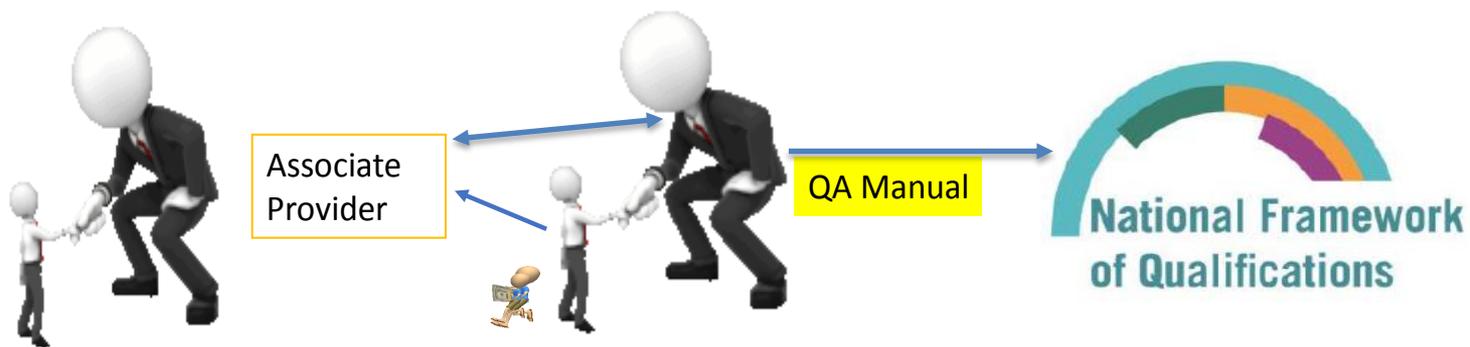
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QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann





Common Awards System
www.fetac.ie

Understanding your CAS award



A Common Awards System
for Further Education and Training



OUTSIDE the NQF

- Many professional CPD ‘qualifications’
- Many work-related awards
- Many **mico**-qualifications provided by companies, organisations, voluntary organisations, trade unions, regulatory bodies, some Ministries of Government.

Language/terms – **disambiguation**

1. The term ‘non-formal’ is not generally used. Providers outside of schools, state-supported colleges and universities are termed – *Community, voluntary sector and private providers*
2. ‘award’ is used more than ‘qualification’ when speaking about inclusion in the NQF
3. The term **VET** is not generally used....

Table 1: Irish NQF characteristics and variants (broadly)

The purpose of Irish NQF originally was a combination of a **COMMUNICATION & Reforming** framework where the relationships across qualifications were to be more coherent and where new ‘technologies’ of levels, credits in HE, learning outcomes, qualifications types and titles were agreed and expected to be used into the future.

It was **less a TRANSFORMATIVE** NQF.

Its development was both ‘organic’ and ‘instrumental’, based on wide consultation, borrowing, and ‘apparent’ equity.

Invariably, powerful interests – particularly the university sector – dominated/s the eventual framework model and its implementation.

The design characteristics of NQFs

Main advantages	Design characteristic from.....to		Main advantages	
Coherence across qualifications Genuine national system	inclusive of all qualifications		partial coverage of qualifications	Implementation easier Piloting possible Staged development strategy
System wide reform possible Linkage with other national policies	designed and managed by central agency		organic development by stakeholders	Encourages harmonisation Stakeholder buy-in Allows regional development
Policy coordination Quality assurance	regulatory framework for assuring quality		classification of all qualifications	Communication with stakeholders
Powerful authority for framework Sanctions for non-compliance	legal basis		voluntary basis	Ownership secured Stakeholders work together
Builds on existing learning infrastructure	descriptors composed of learning inputs		descriptors composed of learning outputs	Independent of institutional structure Linkage with external frameworks
Relevance across all parts of education and training possible Linkage with external frameworks	level defined by descriptor		level defined by national reference qualifications	Builds on existing infrastructure Confidence in new framework higher
Close relationship to labour market Linkage better between education and work	qualifications based on competency standards		qualifications based on units of learning or achievement	Continues traditions of skills supply Builds on existing infrastructure

Table 1. Selected characteristics of a qualifications system and their basic variants

<p>Characteristics of a qualifications system</p>	<p>Basic variants</p>
<p>Types of qualifications that may be included in an NQF-based qualifications system, according to proposed typology of qualifications in the NQF-in project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All types of qualification may be included in the qualifications system YES in theory ■ Only some types of qualifications may be included in the qualifications system ... If they are ‘validated’ with QQI through a QAed provider
<p>Ownership of a qualification in an NQF-based qualifications system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Qualifications included in the system remain the property of the submitting institution ■ Qualifications included in the system become a public good Common Award System (FE level up to 6)
<p>Allowable level of similarity of the qualifications included in an NQF-based qualifications system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Similarity to qualifications included earlier in the qualifications system precludes the ability to include the submitted qualification in the system YES & NO ■ Similarity to qualifications included earlier in the qualifications system does not preclude the ability to include the new qualifications

<p>Character of the legal regulations on including qualifications in an NQF-based qualifications system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Specific regulations on inclusion have the character of required legal norms ■ Specific regulations on inclusion do not have the character of required legal norms
<p>Scope of the regulations on including qualifications in an NQF-based qualifications system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Specific regulations govern all significant elements in the process of including qualifications ■ Only general guidelines are provided, leaving a wide margin of discretion for specific stakeholders??
<p>Degree of centralization of the decisions taken on including qualifications in an NQF-based qualifications system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One institution decides on including qualifications (as well as determines their level)

<p>Role of different stakeholder groups in activities relating to the inclusion of qualifications in an NQF-based qualifications system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The roles of public authorities and social partners are balanced in the process of including non-formal qualifications in NQF-based qualifications systems. Social partners have a strong role. ■ Social partners have a weak role in the process of including non-formal qualifications in NQF-based qualifications systems ■ Social partners play no role in the process of including qualifications.
<p>Cost of including qualifications in an NQF-based qualifications system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fees are incurred when including a qualification in the system ■ No fees are incurred when including a qualification in the system
<p>The formal, legal and financial benefits of having a qualification included in an NQF-based qualifications system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Including qualifications in the system provides various types of formal and financial benefits to learners, training institutions and awarding bodies (scholarships, discounts, the right to seek financing or refunds) ■ Including qualifications in the system provides no practical formal or financial benefits for various stakeholder groups

Proposed models of inclusion of non-formal qualifications Report Section 4

OWNERSHIP

CENTRALITY

PROCEDURES

Qualifications/awards on the Irish NQF are **not 'free' for use** by any provider other than those qualifications/awards listed in the **Common Awards System (CAS)** at levels 1 to 6. In any case, providers must be quality assured as providers and have achieved approval for each qualifications/award programme through the validation process and have paid the appropriate fees for these services. All approved qualifications/awards on the NQF are coded in relation to the provider which developed them. These codes are generally used for applications and monitoring purposes. So, it is not possible for a different provider to 'snatch' a qualification developed by another provider and to replicate it for themselves, beyond the specifications standards published by QQI in the CAS data-base. Provision of major state-funded qualifications/awards in the state at higher education level is monitored by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in relation to supply and demand from learners and the labour market.

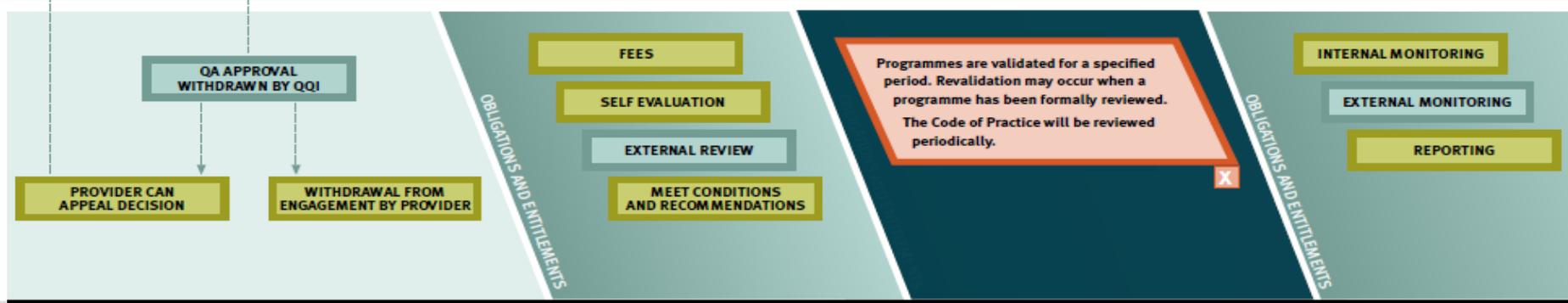
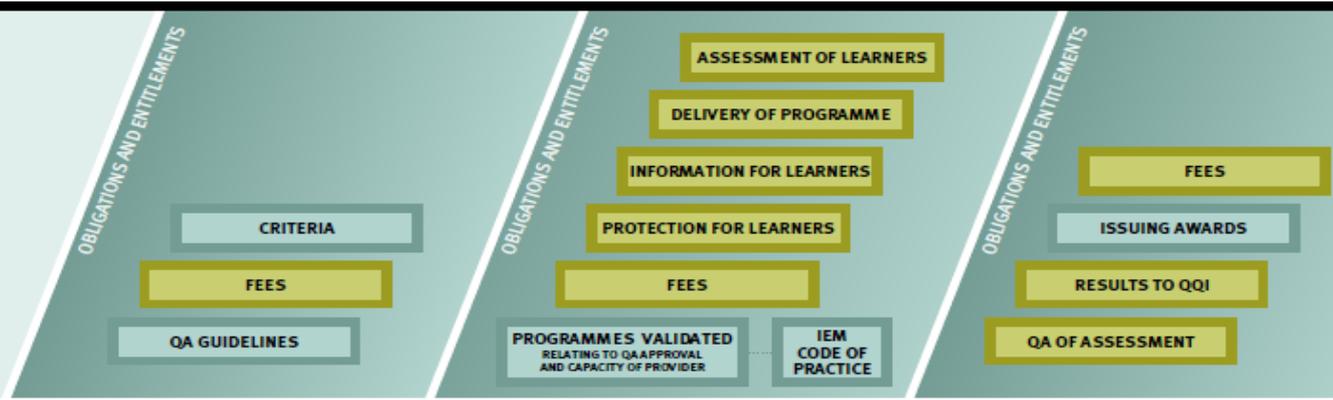
In Ireland, Quality & Qualifications Ireland (**QQI**) is the **national agency** responsible for assuring the quality of qualifications included in NQF.

Under the **2012 Qualifications and Quality (Education and Training) Act**, QQI had become **both** an awarding body and a quality assurance regulator across the ten levels without a demarcation between further education and higher education.

Quality assurance requirements are intended initially for approval of a **provider's competence and capacity** to meet those requirements. If a provider successfully proves that competence and capacity, then the provider is free to apply for approval to offer programmes for **validation** leading to qualifications/awards.



LIFE CYCLE OF PROVIDER ENGAGEMENT



Report Section 5 – Proposed models

Table 12. Properties of qualifications system

Properties	Commentary
<p>Coherence of the national qualifications system</p> <p>Ireland’s NQF originally had a ‘coherent’ approach and has recently become more ‘mechanical’/procedural than ideological or conceptually self-critical.</p>	<p>Coherence of the qualifications system means that a coherent approach is used for all qualifications in the system - in particular, in terms of the way qualifications are described, the assignment of NQF levels, the quality of validation and certification, credit transfer and accumulation, the role of recognition of prior learning.</p> <p>In this report coherence of the system means that its basic assumptions apply all included qualifications, however, taking into account the specificity of each sub-sector of qualifications system. Therefore coherence does not mean ‘mechanic’ unification across the whole national qualifications system.</p>
<p>Incentives for stakeholders to include qualifications in the national qualifications system</p> <p>Perhaps there has been a shift from a ‘voluntarist’ and ‘consensual’ model to more central ‘regulation’ and ‘enforcement’?</p> <p>‘Incentives’ are double-edged!</p> <p>Return on investment of time and money for providers is mixed.</p>	<p>Incentives is understood as solutions (procedures, benefits) that influence motivation of different stakeholders to submit qualifications for inclusion in the qualifications system.</p> <p>Solutions in the national qualifications system might provide positive or negative incentives to stakeholders for submitting qualifications to be included in the system.</p>

Proliferation of the national qualifications system

The Common Awards System has had mixed impact. Some small providers ‘link’/‘associate’ with larger providers and use their QA systems for inclusion in the NQF.

Firstly, in this report proliferation mean that there are many similar qualifications in the qualifications system.

At the same, in another perspective, proliferation means also that are many bodies able to fulfil similar roles within the national qualifications system (developing, submitting, assigning NQF levels, awarding).

Absorption capacity of the national qualifications system

Mixed views on this, depending on which sectors of provider is concerned.

In this report absorption capacity means the ability of the qualifications system to include a determined number of qualifications in the system in a given period of time.

It may occur that NQF based qualifications system provides strong incentives to submit qualifications, but that system is not able to include them in an appropriate period of time.

Dominance of resourceful awarding bodies in the national qualifications system

The Irish NQF has been, and continues to be, unduly influenced by the university sector...both legally and ‘intentionally’.

The school system still remains outside the NQF ...in reality.

The ‘voluntary’ sector has been the ‘looser’ as the NQF became more ‘mechanical’ and ‘business-oriented’.

NQF based qualifications system might be designed in a way that promotes resourceful bodies.

It might be the result of policy aims or it might be the unintentional consequence.

Including non-formal qualifications

??

Deliberately difficult procedures?

Control by powerful stakeholders?

Worth-while?



???

Dominance of ECTS and ECVET? Possibility of other credit systems in NQFs?



PARADIGM SHIFTS?

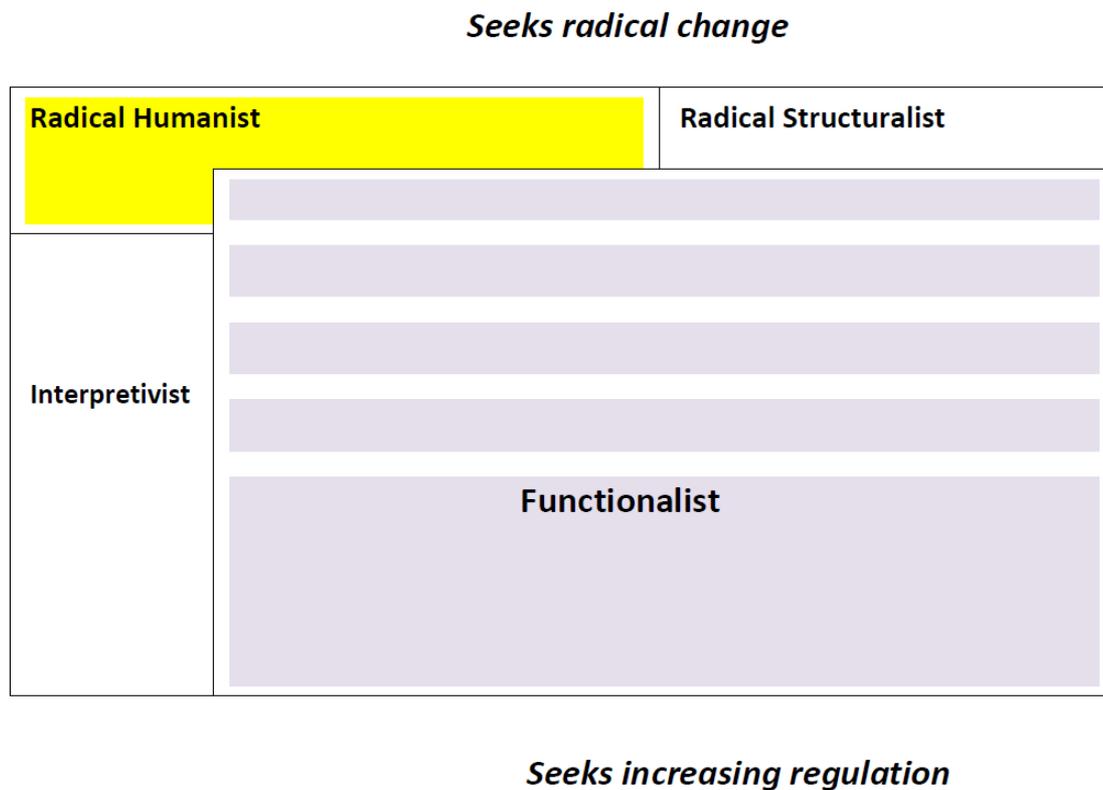


Figure 2: The dominant (future?) paradigm of qualifications frameworks design



1. Could you please share your opinion on the proposed models of inclusion of non-formal education qualifications in the NQF?

2. Could you please indicate ideas, topics, and solutions presented during the conference which were the most interesting, most inspiring for you?