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Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Quality Assurance of EQF level 5 in Ireland

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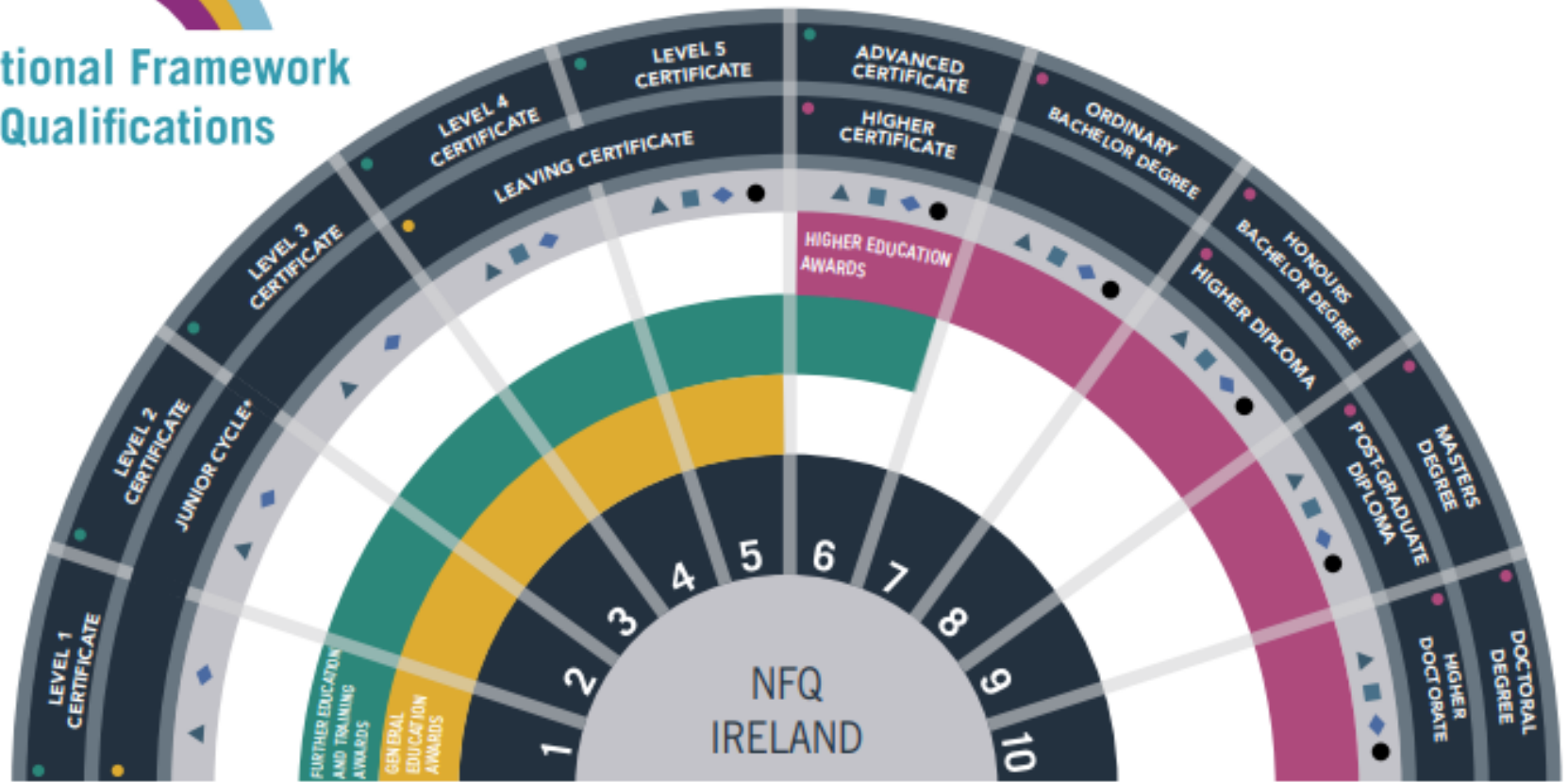
ENQA/CHAIN5 Webinar, April 6, 2023



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National Framework of Qualifications





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Overlapping sectors

- EQF level 5 (=NFQ 6) is present within both tertiary (post-secondary) sub-sectors – HE and Further Education and Training
- This was a determination of the NFQ in 2003



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External QA by QQI

- Quality assurance of education and training
- At *institutional* level, for all FET and HE providers, public and private
- At *programme* level, as an awarding body, for all FET providers and private HE providers
- Universities, including technological institutions, have own programme approval powers



Programme validation

- HE
 - Each programme develops detailed standards (learning outcomes) and is validated similar to bachelors programmes, either by QQ for private HEIs or by public HEI, conforming with generic NFQ descriptors. Valid for 5 years
- FET
 - Old model – fairly detailed national standards (Common Awards System) with individual programmes developed and shared between providers following “light-touch” validation. Valid until standards change
 - New model closer to HE model with programme-specific standards endorsed through programme validation process. Valid for 5 years





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- 334 Higher Certificate programmes (HE)
- 689 Advanced Certificate programmes (FET)
- Details (and recent QQI validation reports) at www.IRQ.ie



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- Evaluation of the Comparability of the Advanced Certificate and Higher Certificate Qualifications
- 2021 research carried out by ECCTIS (UK-ENIC) for QQI
- Documentary analysis, statistical analysis of earning outcomes and stakeholder interviews



Findings

- both the Advanced Certificate and Higher Certificate qualifications are appropriately aligned to NFQ Level 6 in terms of achieved learner outcomes;
- there is a difference in the distribution of NFQ sub-strands between the AC and HC programmes sampled. Whilst the number of sub-strands at Level 5 was comparable for the AC and HC samples respectively, the number of sub-strands at Level 7 was significantly higher for the HC programmes overall (18 for the sample of HCs vs 6 for the sample of ACs).
- entry requirements did not identify a significant difference in the educational level of entrants to either set of programmes sampled.
- the durations of the AC and HC cycles are broadly comparable in that they are at least two academic years fulltime but there are different credit systems and therefore different notional hours of learner effort required 2400 hours for the AC cycle and at least 3000 hours for the HC (based on 120 ECTS).



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Find out more:

- www.QQI.ie
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