

UCD Quality Office Practice Notes

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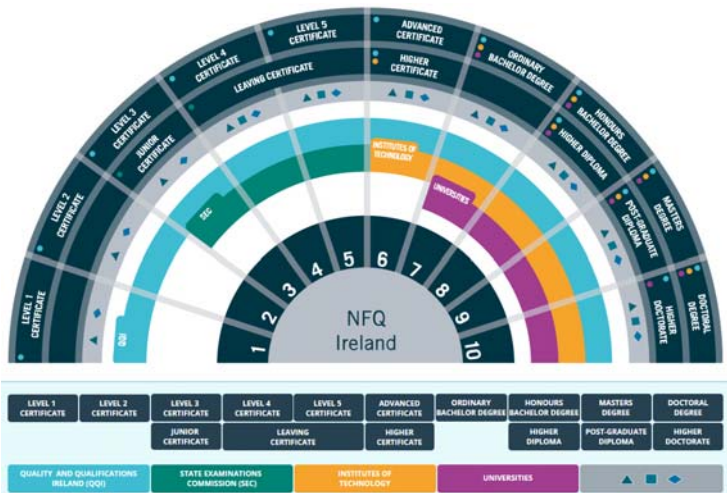
Practice Notes are designed to provide the UCD community with key relevant information relating to national, international and/or sectoral quality assurance and enhancement policies, guidelines, legislation and other publications. They may be based on a particular topic or theme, or provide a quick reckoner vis-à-vis relevant legislation or publication. They are intended to be used as general outline guidance in relation to the subject matter and do not constitute a definitive statement of policy and/or procedure.

National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

The [National Framework of Qualifications \(NFQ\)](#) was established by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland – now part of [Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(QQI\)](#) – to create a coherent structure for the development and recognition of all awards within the Irish education system. It is founded on the principles of learning outcomes which identify the level of knowledge, skills and competence a learner should attain to achieve an award placed on the Framework, and it is also linked to the [European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\)](#), thereby facilitating mobility of learners and mutual recognition of awards throughout Europe.

The aim of the NFQ is to describe a clear relationship between all levels of educational achievement which will provide greater clarity for learners, education training providers and employers. The Framework defines ten levels and recognises four categories of award type at the University level. These are known as:

- (i) **Major Awards** – includes Bachelors, Honours Bachelors, Higher Diploma, Masters and Doctoral degrees
- (ii) **Minor Awards** – used for partial completion of the outcomes of a Major award
- (iii) **Special Purpose Awards** – used for learning that is additional to a Major Award
- (iv) **Supplemental Awards** – used for relatively narrow or purpose-specific achievement



The relationship between the various award types, their NFQ level, and the providers with authority to make such awards is outlined on the NFQ ‘fan diagram’ (see above). The list of UCD awards and their ECTS credit values is included in the [UCD Academic Regulations](#) (see regulation 3.1)

The Level of UCD Awards

In the case of most of the University's major degree programmes; Honours Bachelor Degree, Masters Degree and Doctoral Degree, the associated levels are applicable regardless of date of award. The level of an award is not affected by an individual's achievement within it, that is, the grading or classification. For example, the Bachelor of Commerce degree is classified as a level 8 award, regardless of whether a graduate received a "pass" or "honours" grade. During the process of mapping UCD awards to the Framework, Higher Diploma programmes were reviewed and a number were re-designated as Graduate Diplomas (NFQ level 9). Please [click here](#) to see list of re-designated Higher Diplomas.

Historical/Legacy Awards

Within the context of the NFQ, awards that the University no longer offer are referred to as ‘historical awards’. Awards that were offered by the University prior to the establishment of the NFQ are referred to as legacy awards.

Historical Diploma and Certificate Awards of the University can be found [here](#).

