



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Policy and Criteria for Making Awards



QQI, an integrated agency for quality and qualifications in Ireland

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Policy and Criteria for Making Awards

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1 SUMMARY

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) was established in November 2012 by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (the 2012 Act). The 2012 Act sets out the functions of QQI which includes the making of awards.

This document sets out the QQI Policy and Criteria for the making of an award by QQI or by a provider to whom authority to make an award has been delegated (a provider with DA) under Section 53 of the 2012 Act.

QQI policy is developed through a consultative process involving all stakeholders. Details of the policy development process are available on www.QQI.ie. QQI policy is adopted by the Board and implemented by the executive accordingly.

2 INTRODUCTION

This policy concerns technical matters about how education and training awards are made.

For the purposes of this policy a ‘learner’ means any person who is acquiring or who has acquired knowledge, skill or competence.

This policy does not detail any services that are directly available to the general public.

2.1 Policy Context

2.1.a QQI

QQI makes awards and joint awards respectively under sections 50 or 51 of the 2012 Act.

2.1.b Providers to Whom Authority to Make an Award has been Delegated

A provider with DA to make awards may make awards under this QQI policy to learners who have successfully completed programmes of education and training that it has validated in accordance with the authority delegated to it by QQI.

2.1.c Awarding Bodies Entering into Joint Awarding Agreements with QQI

Under section 51 of the 2012 Act QQI may, for the purposes of making a joint award to an enrolled learner in respect of a programme of education and training that it has validated, enter into a joint awarding arrangement with:

- i. An awarding body, and
- ii. The provider of the programme of education and training where the programme of education and training leading to the joint award is not provided by the awarding body.

2.2 Legal Basis

QQI's general functions are set out in section 9 (1) of the 2012 Act. Sub-sections a, e, f, g and j are particularly relevant here as is section 9(2) which concerns actions to be undertaken in by QQI in the performance of its functions. Section 50 and 51 of the 2012 Act concern the making of awards by QQI or a provider with DA.

2.3 Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of the paper is to establish and publish policies and criteria for the making of an award by:

- a) QQI
- b) A provider with DA.

The 2012 Act is already quite detailed and this policy need not necessarily repeat what is contained in the Act.

3 POLICY AND CRITERIA

3.1 Education and Training Award Names

3.1.a FET Awards

QQI may make named awards in accord with any of the FET award-types established within the NFQ.

FET major, special purpose and supplemental award names shall have the following form (stated in Irish and English):

[Named award stem] in [Specialisation]

Names award stems are:

- i. Major: Level N Certificate or (at Level 6) Advanced Certificate (N is the NFQ level)
- ii. Special Purpose: Level N Specific Purpose Certificate
- iii. Supplemental: Level N Supplemental Certificate.

The Names of minor awards shall have the following form:

[Component Certificate] in Level N [Specialisation]

3.1.b HET Awards

HET major named awards shall have the following form:

[Named Award Stem] in [Specialisation].

The overall length of a named award is limited to 43 characters to ensure that it can be printed clearly on awards parchments.

Normally only the award stem names are 'standardised' unless otherwise determined by the relevant award standard, the remainder of the named award is agreed at validation. QQI maintains and publishes on its website a list of permitted named award stems (Appendix 1¹).

The names of minor, special purpose and supplemental class awards shall comply with the following rules:

- i. Award names for all higher education and training minor, special purpose and supplemental awards at Framework Level 6 must commence with "CERTIFICATE IN".
- ii. Award names for all higher education and training minor, special purpose and supplemental awards at Framework Levels 7-9 must commence with "CERTIFICATE IN" where the corresponding programme or modules amount to less than 60 HET credits otherwise they must commence with "DIPLOMA IN".
- iii. No minor, special purpose or supplemental award classes are currently available at Framework Level 10.
- iv. A minor award must be linked to a major and the name (award title) of the major will appear on the certificate/diploma.

Award names for the professional award class shall be agreed in writing with QQI on a case-by-case basis.

Single subject certificates issued by providers are not Framework awards.

3.2 Making Education and Training Awards under section 50(4)

Education and training awards may be made under this policy by QQI (subject to payment of the applicable fee by the provider concerned) and by providers with DA.

3.3 Making Education and Training Awards under Section 50(3)

QQI provides an award making service that is available to the general public. Details of the service will be provided separately when available.

3.4 Conferring Education and Training Awards

An education and training award signifies a significant achievement and it is fitting that there be a formal public announcement of all awards made.

A formal public conferring ceremony should normally be arranged for each cohort of higher education and training graduands. Guidelines on academics (caps, academic gowns, hoods and epitogues) and the conduct of conferring ceremonies are available from QQI.

¹ This list is amended from time to time by QQI as appropriate.

3.5 Records

QQI collects, and requires providers to whom authority to make awards has been delegated to collect, specified data about each named award made and the learner to whom the award is made.

Providers to whom authority to make awards has been delegated shall keep informed of the current QQI specifications for awards records to be maintained, collect the required data and make these data available to QQI upon request.

QQI retains and analyses data concerning awards and awardees (learners) to inform its work.

3.6 Withdrawing an Education and Training Award

An education award may be made where a learner has successfully completed a validated programme or under section 50(3) where QQI is of the opinion that an award can be made.

Award documentation (e.g. parchments and certificates) issued by QQI or a provider with DA, whether written, printed, electronically stored or otherwise shall remain the property of the awarding body permanently.

If, after the award has been made to a learner, it can be demonstrated that the learner did not deserve the award then the award may be withdrawn by QQI or the provider to whom, under section 53, authority to make an award has been delegated.

All providers to whom this policy applies shall ensure that they implement procedures for the withdrawal of an award from a learner (or for the recommendation of withdrawal of an award by QQI) including learner appeals procedures. The procedures for the recommendation of withdrawal of an award shall be the responsibility of the provider concerned when the award was made by QQI unless the provider concerned has ceased being relevant provider under the 2012 Act.

3.7 Awards Standards

QQI, or a provider to whom QQI has delegated authority to make awards, may make an award to a learner if satisfied (in accordance with the 2012 Act) that the learner has acquired, and where appropriate demonstrated, the appropriate standard of knowledge, skill or competence as determined by QQI under section 49(1) of the Act of 2012. Detailed information about QQI's awards standards determinations is presented in the QQI Policy QP:12 Policy for Determining Awards Standards.

3.8 Credit

Credit is a measure of expected learner effort. In the context of this policy it concerns the expected learning time required to achieve the requirements for an award. Awards are made on the basis of the achievement of a prescribed standards of knowledge, skill and competence. The expected learning time depends on both the learner's baseline knowledge, skill and competence; and the knowledge, skill and competence to be achieved for the award. Depending on the baseline the expected learning time will vary for the same award. It will also vary with ability, motivation and the teaching and learning environment. Some of this variation can be marginalised (averaged out) but not baseline dependent variation. Accordingly, credit can only be attached

to a named award when the learner's baseline knowledge, skill and competence is specified.

Two credit systems are in use: one for HET (where there are 60 HET Credits in an average full academic year of learner effort) and the other for FET (where one FET Credit signifies an investment of 10 hours of effort for the average learner). Averages are to be taken over learners studying at similar NFQ levels in the same broad field of learning.

3.9 Learner Assessment, Awards Classifications and Grades

Providers of programmes leading to QQI awards and providers to whom, under section 53, authority to make an award has been delegated are required to establish procedures which are fair and consistent for the assessment of enrolled learners to ensure the standards of knowledge, skill or competence determined by QQI under section 49(1) are acquired, and where appropriate, demonstrated, by enrolled learners.

The assessment, classification and grading of education and training awards are discussed in QQI's published guidelines on assessment.

3.10 Award Certificates

QQI parchments and certificates are designed to be clear and verifiable. They contain security features that reduce the risk of fraud. QQI permanently retains information concerning each award that it makes. A person to whom a QQI award certificate or parchment has been presented as evidence of learning achievement may contact QQI to verify the award.

The design and information content of QQI award parchments and certificates is consistent with their purpose and significance.

The classification of awards shall appear on all parchments unless the awards is unclassified.

Providers to whom QQI has delegated authority to make an award may design their own certificates and parchments but must obtain QQI's agreement for the design (including text) before issue.

3.11 Europass Diploma and Certificate Supplements²

Awards of QQI and those of providers with DA will be accompanied by a Europass Certificate or Diploma Supplement whichever is applicable.

3.12 Procedures for Award Certification by QQI

QQI makes awards based on quality assured results received from providers whose programmes have been validated.

Providers are invoiced for certificates generated according to a published fee schedule.

² More information on Europass can be found at <http://www.europass.ie/europass/index.html>

4 REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This policy and QQI's principles and approach to making awards will be reviewed two years after the option of this policy, or earlier if necessary.

APPENDIX 1

Table of Major Education and Training Named Awards Stems at 11 June 2014

| Level <i>Leibhéal</i> | Titles of Award-Types <i>Teidil Chineál Dámhachtain</i> | Title of Named Award Stems <i>Teideal Dámhachtain Ainmnithe</i> |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| 10 | Doctoral Degree <i>Céim Dochtúra</i> | Doctor of Philosophy <i>Dochtúir le Fealsúnacht</i> |
| | | Doctor of Business Administration <i>Dochtúir le Riarachán Ghnó</i> |
| 9 | Masters Degree <i>Céim Mháistreachta</i> | Master of Laws, Legum Magister (LLM) ³ <i>Máistir le Dlí</i> |
| | | Master of Architecture <i>Máistir Ailtireachta</i> |
| | | Master of Arts <i>Máistir Ealaíon</i> |
| | | Master of Business <i>Máistir Gnó</i> |
| | | Master of Business Administration <i>Máistir Riaracháin Ghnó</i> |
| | | Master of Engineering <i>Máistir Innealtóireachta</i> |
| | | Master of Science <i>Máistir Eolaíochta</i> |
| | | Professional Master of Education <i>Máistir Gairmiúil san Oideachas</i> |
| | Postgraduate Diploma <i>Dioplóma Iarchéime</i> | Postgraduate Diploma in Arts <i>Dioplóma Iarchéime san Ealaíon</i> |
| | | Postgraduate Diploma in Business <i>Dioplóma Iarchéime i nGnó</i> |
| | | Postgraduate Diploma in Engineering <i>Dioplóma Iarchéime san Innealtóireacht</i> |
| | | Postgraduate Diploma in Science <i>Dioplóma Iarchéime san Eolaíocht</i> |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| 8 | Honours Bachelor Degree <i>Céim Bhaitisiléara Onóracha</i> | Bachelor of Architecture(Honours) <i>Baitisiléir Ailtireachta (Onóracha)</i> | |
| | | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) <i>Baitisiléir Ealaíon (Onóracha)</i> | |
| | | Bachelor of Business (Honours) <i>Baitisiléir Gnó (Onóracha)</i> | |
| | | Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) <i>Baitisiléir Innealtóireachta (Onóracha)</i> | |
| | | Bachelor of Science (Honours) <i>Baitisiléir Eolaíochta (Onóracha)</i> | |
| | | Bachelor of Music (Honours) <i>Baitisiléir Ceol (Onóracha)</i> | |
| | | Honours Bachelor of Laws, Legum Baccalaureus (LLB) ¹ <i>Baitisiléir le Dlí (Onóracha)</i> | |
| | Higher Diploma <i>Ard-Diplóma</i> | Higher Diploma in Arts <i>Ard-Diplóma san Ealaíon</i> | |
| | | Higher Diploma in Business <i>Ard-Diplóma i nGnó</i> | |
| | | Higher Diploma in Engineering <i>Ard-Diplóma san Innealtóireacht</i> | |
| | | Higher Diploma in Science <i>Ard-Diplóma san Eolaíocht</i> | |
| | | Professional Diploma in Education <i>Diopóma Gairmiúil san Oideachas</i> | |
| | 7 | Ordinary Bachelor Degree <i>Gnáthchéim Baitisiléara</i> | Bachelor of Arts <i>Baitisiléir Ealaíon</i> |
| | | | Bachelor of Business <i>Baitisiléir Gnó</i> |
| Bachelor of Engineering <i>Baitisiléir Innealtóireachta</i> | | | |
| Bachelor of Science <i>Baitisiléir Eolaíochta</i> | | | |
| Bachelor of Music <i>Baitisiléir Ceol</i> | | | |
| 6 (HET) | Higher Certificate <i>Ardteastas</i> | Higher Certificate in Arts <i>Ardteastas Ealaíon</i> | |
| | | Higher Certificate in Business <i>Ardteastas Gnó</i> | |
| | | Higher Certificate in Engineering <i>Ardteastas Innealtóireachta</i> | |
| | | Higher Certificate in Science <i>Ardteastas Eolaíochta</i> | |

| | | |
|---------|--|--|
| 6 (FET) | Advanced Certificate <i>Iartheastas</i> | |
| 5 | Level 5 Certificate <i>Teastas Leibhéal 5</i> | |
| 4 | Level 4 certificate <i>Teastas Leibhéal 4</i> | |
| 3 | Level 3 Certificate <i>Teastas Leibhéal 3</i> | |
| 2 | Level 2 Certificate <i>Teastas Leibhéal 2</i> | |
| 1 | Level 1 Certificate <i>Teastas Leibhéal 1</i> | |

3 Latin forms have been established in recognition of conventional practice in this field in Ireland. Honours Bachelor of Laws award holders may use LLB abbreviations and Master of Laws awards holders the LL.M abbreviation. This entitlement to use abbreviations is contrary to precedent, but without regulatory force for consistency.





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