



Údarás Náisiúnta
Cáilíochtaí na hÉireann
National Qualifications
Authority of Ireland



Referencing to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF)

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The Irish NFQ: Architecture

10 level structure, based on learning outcomes

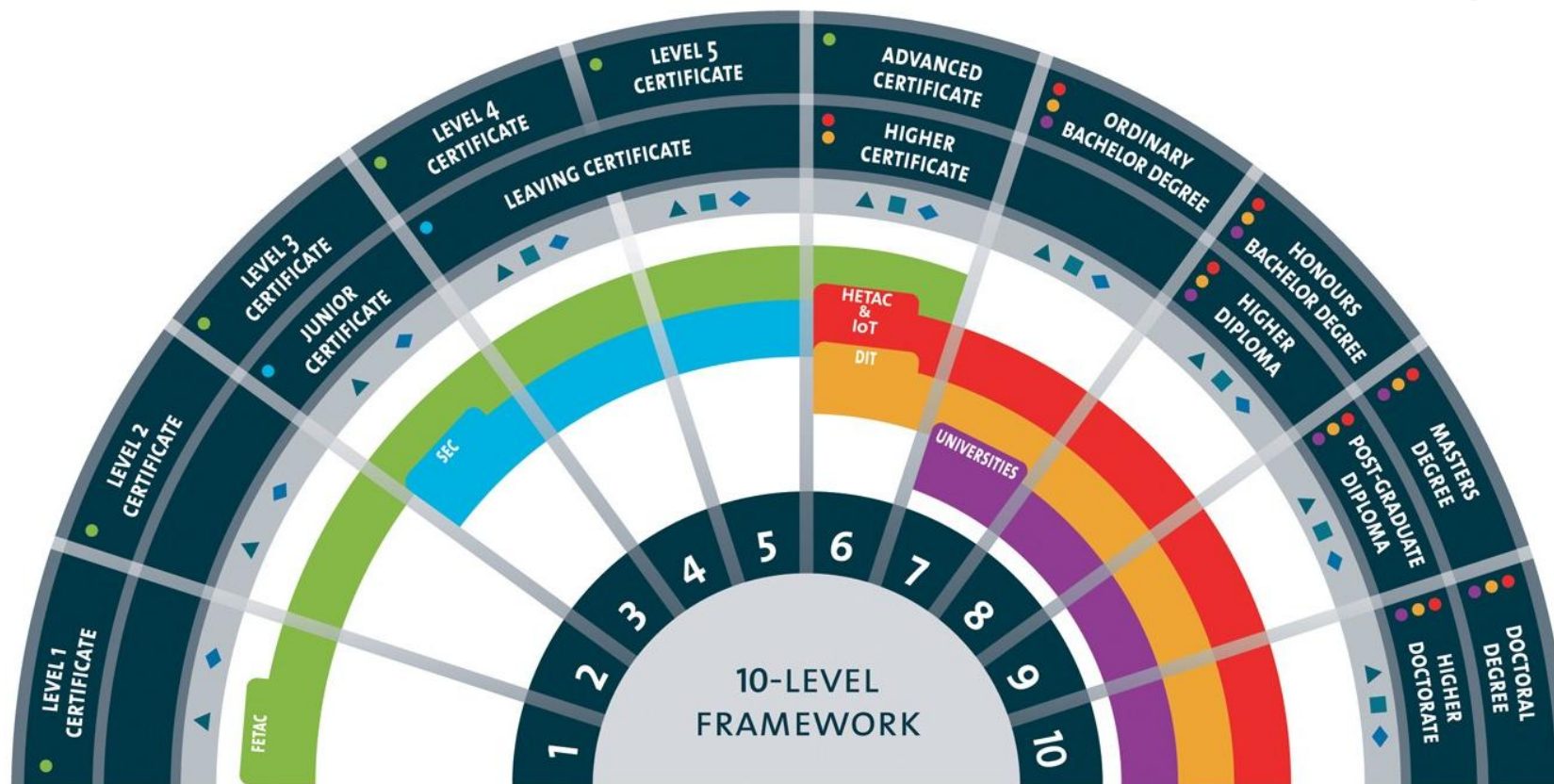
- Knowledge (Breadth and Kind)
- Know-how and skill (Range and Selectivity)
- Competence (Context, Role, Learning to Learn and Insight)

Architecture also includes

- Award-types - major, minor, special purpose, supplemental
- Named awards – the particular qualifications obtained by learners

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS

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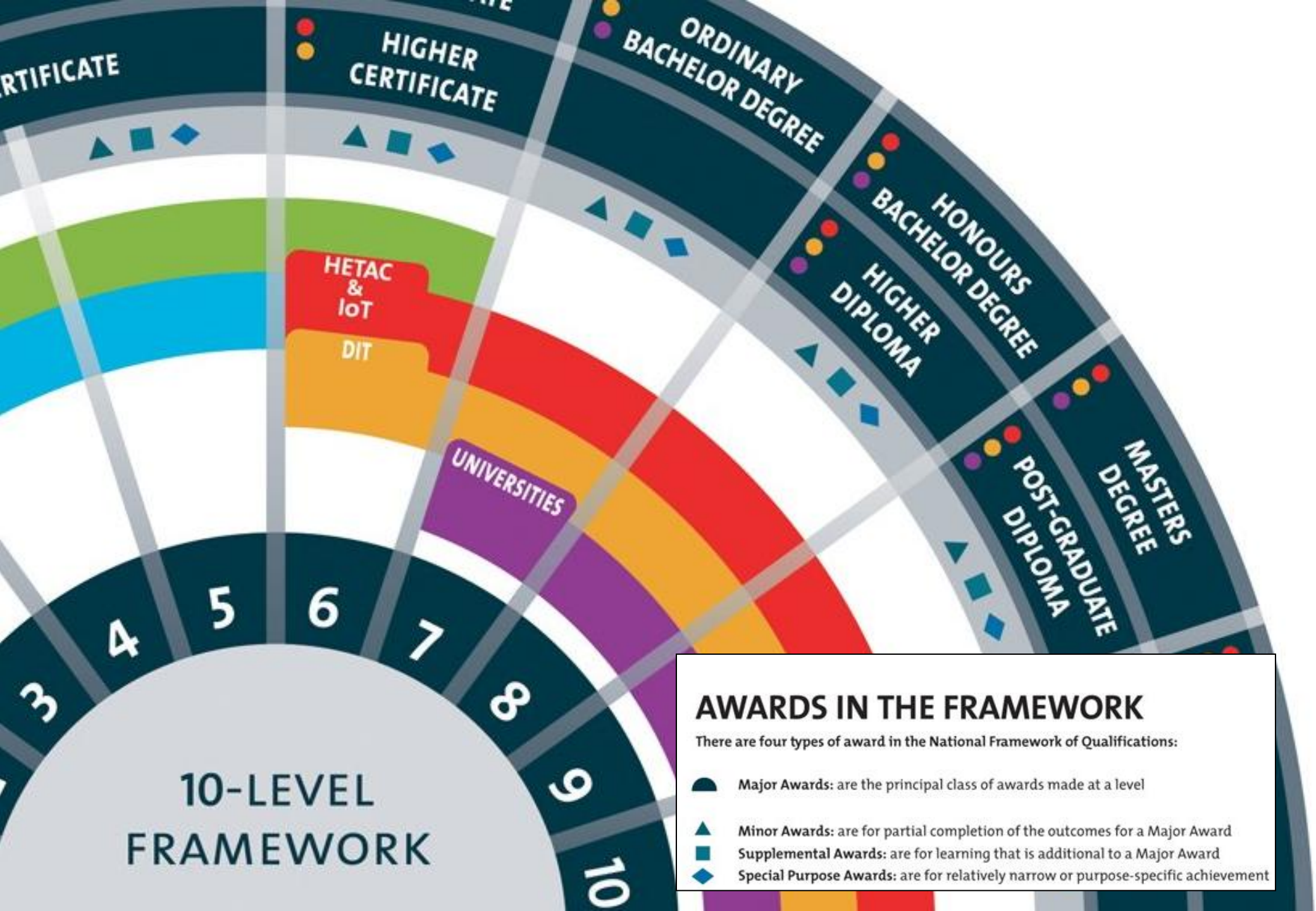
AWARDING BODIES

- 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



10-LEVEL FRAMEWORK

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European Meta-Frameworks

- Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (adopted by European Ministers, Bergen 2005) - the ‘Bologna Framework’
 - Verification of compatibility with the Irish National Framework of Qualifications – completed November 2006
 - One of first two countries to do this on a “pilot basis”
- European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (adopted by European parliament, April 2008) - the ‘EQF’
 - 8 levels, based on learning outcomes
 - Irish NFQ referenced to EQF in June 2009



European Meta-Frameworks

In both cases

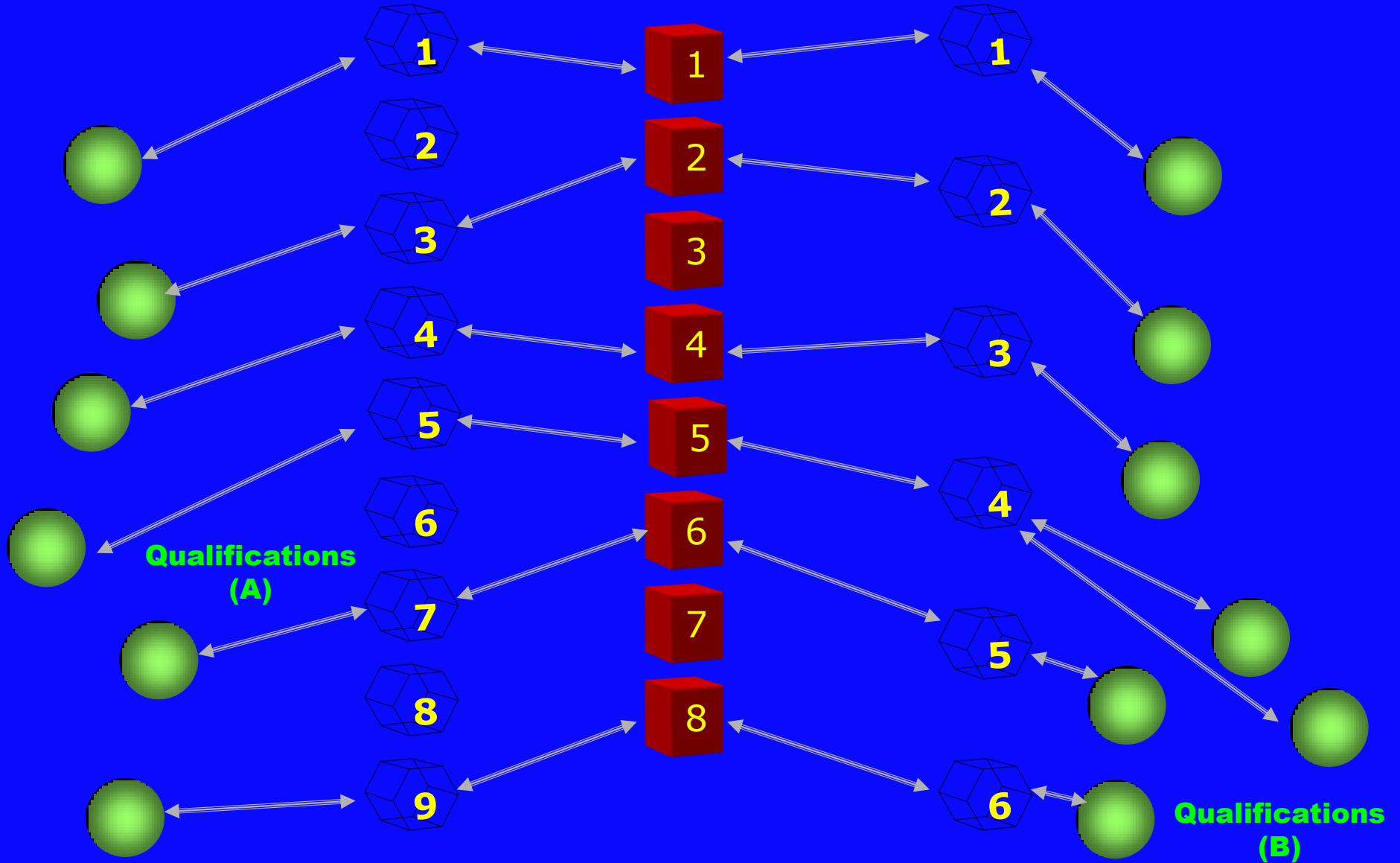
- Primacy with the National Framework of Qualifications
- Quality assurance required in national arrangements
- Qualifications relate to national frameworks and frameworks talk to each other through meta-frameworks
- Countries self-certify the link of their national frameworks to European frameworks following established criteria and procedures



European
Qualifications
Framework

Country A

Country B





EQF: Implementation

- (European) EQF Advisory Group and National Coordination Points
- Implementation of EQF is a voluntary process. Countries proceeding are asked to implement in two stages
- The first stage (referring national qualifications levels to the EQF) should be complete by 2010
- Ireland completed this stage in June 2009
- The second stage (introducing a reference to the EQF in all new Certificate and Diploma Supplements) should be completed by 2012



Implementation: Referencing to EQF

- National Qualifications Authority is Irish National Coordination Point
- Qualifications Authority convened a National Steering Committee
- Steering committee included representatives from Further Education & Training, Higher Education & Training, Universities' and schools' sectors and three international experts
- Committee used Referencing Criteria and Procedures agreed by the EQF Advisory Group
- Consultation with stakeholders an important part of the process
 - Consultative Group; national seminar; information bulletins; draft reports published on website



The Referencing Report concludes:

- There is a clear and demonstrable link between NFQ levels and EQF levels (*C and P: 2*)
- The NFQ, and qualifications within it, based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes, and are linked to credit systems and arrangements for the Recognition of Prior Learning (*C and P: 3*)
- There are transparent criteria and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications in the NFQ (*C and P: 4*)
- The quality assurance systems operating... underpin the NFQ and its implementation (*C and P: 5*) .



Referencing findings: EQF and NFQ

EQF levels	NFQ Levels	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	6	Advanced Certificate (FET award); Higher Certificate (HET award)
6	7	Ordinary Bachelors Degree
	8	Honours Bachelor Degree, Higher Diploma
7	9	Masters Degree, Post-Graduate Diploma
8	10	Doctoral Degree, Higher Doctorate



EQF, 'Bologna' and NFQ

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



EIPET module – ‘how to translate?’

- Accreditation by IT Tralee, under delegated authority from the Higher Education and Training Awards Council
- Explicit statement of the NFQ Level
- ...and Award type
- Utilise the referencing of NFQ to EQF to ‘translate’ to other countries’ education and training systems



Conclusion

- Irish EQF referencing process was completed in June 2009
- Other countries working on referencing qualifications systems to EQF
- Real benefits to learners when many referencing processes completed
- EQF supporting **mobility** and **lifelong learning**
- Further information available at www.nqai.ie/interdev_eqf.html and http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44_en.htm