

The ECCE scheme and qualifications (September 2009)

Introduction

This leaflet aims to set out the qualifications required by pre-school personnel to qualify for either the standard or higher capitation rate of grant payable with the new pre-school year (ECCE) which is starting in January 2010.

It also sets out the type of information that should be available about a course and the type of questions that should be asked by persons who wish to further their studies in early childhood care and education

This leaflet does not recommend individual courses.

ECCE scheme and capitation rates

The pre-school year which is being introduced in 2010 has two rates per qualifying child per annum.

- a standard rate and
- a higher capitation rate

Standard rate

To qualify for the standard rate of **€2,450** per eligible child per annum, the pre-school leader should hold a Major Award (qualification) in childcare/early education at a minimum of **Level 5 or its equivalent** on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). A Major Award at Level 5 is made up of a number (usually 8) of component awards or certificates, known as Minor Awards. Learners can build up to a Major Award over a period of time if they have the required number of component certificates which includes the mandatory modules. Education and Training Providers will be able to provide individuals with information on the required modules to obtain a Major Award.

During the first 2 full years of the scheme, the qualification requirement will be considered to be met where a person can demonstrate that he or she has achieved a certification for a recognised award in ECCE that includes significant content covering the core knowledge areas, i.e., child development, early learning, health and welfare and has at least **2 years** experience of working in a position of responsibility with children in the 0-6 age range.

Higher capitation rate

To qualify for the higher capitation rate of **€2,850** per child per annum, the pre-school leader must hold a childcare or early years education related Major Award at Level 7¹ or Level 8² on the NFQ or equivalent and have **3 years** experience working in the sector. Pre-school assistants in these services must hold a childcare relevant qualification equivalent to Level 5 on the NFQ

¹ The Major Award at Level 7 is the Ordinary Bachelor Degree

² The Major Awards at Level 8 are the Honours Bachelor Degree and Higher Diploma

The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) is a system of ten levels. Each level is based on nationally agreed standards of knowledge, skill and competence, i.e., what an individual is expected to know, understand and be able to do following successful completion of a process of learning. It includes learning from the very initial stages to the most advanced stages and all such learning may be achieved in schools or colleges at work or in the home or community. Further information can be seen at Appendix 1.

Furthering your studies in Early Childhood Care and Education.

If you are thinking of obtaining a qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or adding to your existing qualifications in this area and want to be eligible for funding through the ECCE scheme, it is important that the course you choose covers, in depth, the following core knowledge areas:

- Child Development
- Early Learning
- Health and Welfare

It is equally important that the course you choose is accredited and that the resulting qualification is recognised through the NFQ. To get the most from your choices about education and training, it is worth asking education and training providers the following questions:

- What qualification does a particular course lead to?
- Who is the awarding body?
- Does a course lead to a qualification that is recognised through the NFQ?
- What level is the qualification at on the NFQ?
- What type of qualification is it, i.e., is it a Major Award or a component certificate which is a Minor Award?
- If the course on offer is a component certificate (Minor Award), what are the options available to progress to a Major Award?
- What are the options to progress to the next NFQ level after completing the course?
- Is the provider of this programme registered with FETAC or HETAC?

A good source of information is QualifaX, the National Learners' Database: www.qualifax.ie This website provides information on courses, including the NFQ level of the resulting qualification where applicable.

What should I do if I have concerns about a course being offered by an Education and Training provider?

Check with the relevant Awarding Body to see if the course on offer is properly accredited. The Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) is the sole awarding body for all further education and training awards from NFQ Levels 1 to 6 while the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) makes higher education and training awards outside of the university sector from NFQ Levels 6 to 10. The Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) makes awards in the NFQ from Levels 6 to 10.

A list of FETAC registered providers can be found on its website, www.fetac.ie via the following link: <http://www.fetac.ie/qa/ProviderQAList.htm>

A list of HETAC accredited providers can be found on its website, www.hetac.ie via the following link: <http://www.hetac.ie/links.cfm?sID=20>

Please ensure that both the awarding body and the particular course you wish to pursue is recognised through the NFQ

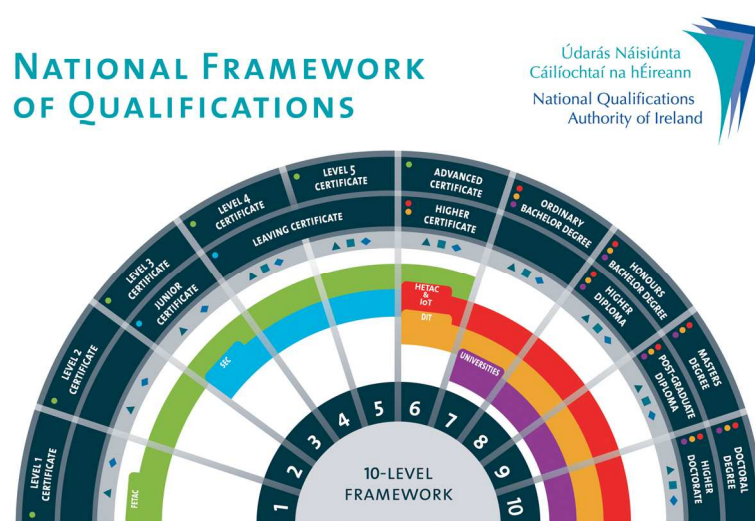
Where can I get further information in relation to the ECCE Scheme?

You should contact your local County or City Childcare Committee (CCC) if you have any additional queries in relation to the ECCE scheme and qualifications required. A list of CCCs and their contact details can be seen at Appendix II

Appendix 1

Further information about the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) is a system of ten levels that originated through the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999. Each level is based on nationally agreed standards of knowledge, skill and competence, i.e., what an individual is expected to know, understand and be able to do following successful completion of a process of learning. The NFQ accommodates qualifications gained in schools, the workplace, the community, training centres, colleges and universities, from the most basic to the most advanced levels of learning. Please see the ‘fan diagram’ below of the NFQ:



Awarding Bodies

An awarding body is a body that has the legal power to make an award (qualification) in order to recognise your learning. A number of national awarding bodies with a statutory (legal) basis in Ireland have had their qualifications included in the NFQ.

The national awarding bodies include:

Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC)

The Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) is the national awarding body for all further education and training awards included in the NFQ from Levels 1 to 6.

Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC)

The Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) makes higher education and training awards outside of the university sector from NFQ Levels 6 to 10.

Institutes of Technology (IoT)

The Institutes of Technology (IoT) make their own awards at specified levels under delegated authority from HETAC. These are included in the NFQ from Levels 6 to 10.

Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)

The Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) makes awards in the NFQ from Levels 6 to 10.

Universities

The Universities make awards at NFQ Levels 7 to 10. There are eight universities in Ireland; they are, Dublin City University (DCU); National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG); National University of Ireland, Maynooth; University College Cork (UCC); University College Dublin (UCD); University of Limerick (UL) Trinity College Dublin (TCD); The National University of Ireland (NUI) also makes awards directly in the colleges it recognises, i.e., the Institute of Public Administration (IPA); the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI); the National College of Art and Design (NCAD); Milltown Institute; and, the Shannon College of Hotel Management.

Award-Types in the National Framework of Qualifications

The NFQ includes different classes or categories of awards in order to recognise both large and smaller packages of learning. This gives the learner the freedom to build their qualifications in ways that suit their needs.

There are four classes of award-types:

- ❑ **Major** Awards are the main class of award made at a level. These include awards such as the Leaving Certificate, the Advanced Certificate and the Honours Bachelor Degree.
- ❑ **Minor** Awards provide recognition for learners who achieve a range of learning outcomes but not the specific combination of learning outcomes required for a major award. These awards allow learners to build up units of learning at their own pace to meet their own needs.
- ❑ **Special-purpose** awards are made for very specific purposes and are normally not linked to a major award. **Supplemental** awards are for learning which is additional to a previous award. They could, for example, relate to updating and refreshing knowledge or skills, or to continuing professional development.

Frequently Asked Questions about providers and the qualifications included in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

How do I know if a Further Education and Training Provider is registered with FETAC?

FETAC maintains a list of recognised Education and Training Providers on their website. Please see www.fetac.ie/qa/ProviderQAList.htm

Please ensure that both the awarding body and the particular course you wish to pursue is recognised through the NFQ.

How do I know if a Higher Education and Training Provider is registered with HETAC?

A list of HETAC accredited providers can be seen at <http://www.hetac.ie/links.cfm?sID=20>

Please ensure that both the awarding body and the particular course you wish to pursue is recognised through the National Framework of Qualifications

I gained my qualification in another country. Can it be recognised through the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)?

Qualifications made in other countries can be recognised here. Qualifications Recognition, which is based at the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), provides a free information service that helps individuals compare their foreign qualifications with Irish qualifications. The service provides information regarding the foreign qualification held by you and compares the foreign qualification to a qualification that is placed at a particular level on the Irish NFQ.

An increasing number of foreign qualifications and information on their comparability in an Irish context is available in the 'International Qualifications Database' on the Qualifications Recognition website at www.qualrec.ie

I gained my qualification in the UK from a UK awarding body. Can it be recognised through the Irish NFQ?

In the first instance, you must establish if the awarding body is a recognised awarding body in the UK and what level the qualification is at on the UK's Qualifications Frameworks. For further (vocational) education and training providers, you can do this by checking the National Database of Accredited Qualifications (NDAQ) in the UK at <http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/index.aspx>. For higher education and training providers, please check the website of the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills in the UK at <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/recognisedukdegrees/index.cfm?fuseaction=institutes.list&InstituteCategoryID=2>

With this information, you may then use the document entitled 'Qualifications can cross boundaries' as a quick guide to how the qualification compares to a level on the Irish NFQ. This document is available on the Qualifications Recognition website via the following link: http://www.qualificationsrecognition.ie/recognition/int_qual_databse/uk/documents/CrossBoundaries.pdf.

I gained my qualification in Ireland from a UK awarding body. Can it be recognised through the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)?

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) has a process in place whereby UK awarding bodies who provide awards in Ireland may have these awards

aligned to the Irish NFQ. The main purpose of aligning these qualifications is to provide learners with clear information regarding the qualification and the level at which it best fits on the Irish NFQ. A number of UK awarding bodies have gone through this process and awards which have been aligned can be accessed on www.nqai.ie/AlignmentofUKawards.html