

Údarás Náisiúnta
Cáilíochtaí na hÉireann
National Qualifications
Authority of Ireland



Qualifications Recognition

at

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

Annual Report of the recognition service 2008

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Introduction

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland assumed the role of the Irish ENIC-NARIC in 2003. Since that time, it has established a qualifications recognition service which is aimed at individuals, employers, education providers and other stakeholders who may have enquiries concerning education and training awards made outside of Ireland. As the Irish ENIC-NARIC, the Authority also has a role in promoting and providing information on Irish awards abroad. This paper reports on the activities of the recognition service in 2008.

Principles and Objectives of the Recognition Service

The principles and objectives of the recognition service are outlined below

Principles

1. be the definitive source of information and reference on Irish and foreign education and training qualifications and will:
 - provide up-to-date and comprehensive information on the Irish education system and on the countries for which it provides advice;
 - develop unilateral understandings of foreign education systems;
 - seek to develop recognition agreements / framework alignments with other countries where appropriate and be cognisant of sectoral agreements and framework developments in other countries as they relate to qualifications;
 - make advice/information regarding the comparability of Irish and foreign qualifications publicly available and ensure that it is current, accurate and consistent; and
 - seek to continue to increase the visibility and awareness of the qualifications recognition service.

2. fulfil its responsibilities with regard to the recognition of Irish and foreign qualifications in line with relevant legislation and agreements, which includes *inter alia*:

- compliance with the requirements and spirit of the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region and the Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications (Riga Recommendations); and
 - compliance with the Freedom of Information Acts (1997 & 2003) and the Data Protection Acts (1988 & 2003);
3. endeavour to provide advice and / or information on all qualifications, including those not currently recognised through the NFQ, by
- promoting the full recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland by institutions, employers and society in general;
 - promoting the full recognition of Irish qualifications abroad by institutions, employers and society in general; and
 - providing advice regarding completed Irish and foreign qualifications upon submission of required documentation
4. use the NFQ as the basis for all qualifications recognition advice provided
5. adopt a proactive approach to the recognition of qualifications which is responsive to national trends and requirements
6. operate a service that is non-discriminatory and customer-focused by:
- providing fit-for-purpose, consistent advice and / or information to clients in a timely and efficient manner based on extensive research and a robust process;
 - issuing advice to clients in not longer than 3 months; and
 - referring clients to appropriate external sources of information / contact points when unable to assist directly.

7. be transparent, consistent and coherent in all of its activities and will:

- undertake to explain, as fully as possible, the basis for the advice it provides to the applicant.

8. collaborate with stakeholders in carrying out its qualifications recognition responsibilities [and cultivate a positive working environment with those stakeholders], and will:

- seek to ensure processes employed by partner organisations are transparent, consistent and coherent; and
- seek an explanation of the rationale used by partner organisations in the formulation of advice.

9. seek to identify and anticipate the resources required to operate the service optimally.

Objectives

- To build up an information centre that provides reliable, comprehensive and consistent information to all stakeholders
- To provide an efficient service to stakeholders ensuring that queries and recognition requests are responded to in a timely manner
- To maintain links with the ENIC/NARIC network and ensure that Ireland is adequately represented and in turn to ensure that the agenda of the enic-naric network is fed back within a national context

Overview of the year

2008 has seen a number of changes come into effect within the recognition service. Following on from the work completed in 2007, the need for country education profiles was identified by the recognition service. As the number of applicants availing of the service increased year on year, it was noted that the recognition service was receiving a large number of applications from countries such as Poland, Lithuania and Nigeria. It was recognised that the processing of qualification recognition applications from countries such as these would be far more efficient if staff were able to draw upon detailed descriptions of the education and training systems operating therein and, more particularly, accurately researched comparability statements of the same countries' qualifications, specifically related to Irish qualifications levels and awards. To this end, the Executive instituted a programme of developing Country Education Profiles (CEPs). CEPs would immediately give recognition staff access to all of the relevant information required to make informed and confident decisions on the assessment of particular qualifications, as they would be grounded in solid research and verified within the home country.

The advent of CEPs also holds out the prospect of improving the time frames for processing individual applications.. In 2008 the Executive commenced and completed profiles on the following countries: Russia, Lithuania, Nigeria, Pakistan, China, Poland and Ukraine. Countries were selected on the basis of volume of applications received by the Executive and also as a result of communication with higher education providers. The benefit of CEPs is two-fold; Applicants can expect a response to their recognition request within a two-week timeframe. In addition, the system ensures that research work is structured and co-ordinated and that particular pieces of research on individual qualifications are not being duplicated by the Executive. As well as being in a position to comment quickly on these countries, the Executive also issues instant responses for the majority of awards made in the UK, Romania and USA.

The website of the recognition service has been updated during 2008 to ensure that it captures the various aspects of the work carried out. Particularly useful to stakeholders

is the international qualifications database which was first created in 2006 and has systematically developed over the past number of years. It now contains information on 16 countries, with completed profiles available for 7 of these. Also, as part of the website update, the old Qualifications Recognition Ireland brand has been phased out. The recognition service is now more clearly identified as being an integral part of the Qualifications Authority and the recognition activities are more closely linked to the ongoing work on implementation of the National Framework of Qualifications.

In addition to this, the recognition team has been busy in maintaining an efficient service to stakeholders who wish to obtain recognition of their qualifications. Staff have been engaged with stakeholders throughout the year, attending and presenting at conferences and information seminars, as well as hosting events the service's own events. It is strategically important to have a presence at these events in order to fully support and engage with stakeholders.

The Executive is constantly seeking ways to improve the service. Beginning in late 2007 and continuing throughout 2008, an internal review and reorganisation of the recognition service was undertaken. This responded to the findings of the Authority Quality review and internal reorganisation. It aimed to fully integrate (and support) the service with that of developing the Framework and promoting the recognition of qualifications at home and abroad. The review covered all aspects of the service – including the nature, extent and value of the advice provided, detailed operational procedures, the effectiveness of interactions with stakeholders, building and managing knowledge and practical ways to improve efficiency. It also involved significant work to ensure compliance with data protection requirements. The work was supported by the entire organization. The following changes have inter alia been instituted over the previous 12 months:

- The Authority Executive formally commenced processing and assessing all higher education applications

- Incomplete documentation is returned directly to the applicant following the introduction of a missing document protocol – the formal assessment of an application does not now begin until all of the requisite documentation is received from applicants
- The website now contains country education profiles on China, Russia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Poland, Pakistan and Nigeria as well as information on a number of other countries.
- The letter templates concerning the statements of comparability have been revised and now contain more information on the NFQ level to which an award is being compared and the ‘fan diagram’ is included in responses.
- The application form has been revised and now includes information on our data protection policies in relation to the Data Protection Act. It also includes a proviso that comparisons are based on current knowledge and may change in the future.
- Applications from the following countries are logged and closed immediately; Romania, Poland, UK, USA, Lithuania (post 2000), Nigeria, Russia, China and Ukraine
- The Executive introduced a new policy with regard to the storing of files: hard copy files are to be shredded after one year (or nine months after a response is issued) and soft copies are to be anonymised
- Garda applications concerning awards from China, UK and Poland are now assessed within the recognition service and are no longer sent to the Department of Education for assessment

Recognition Service – Applications and queries

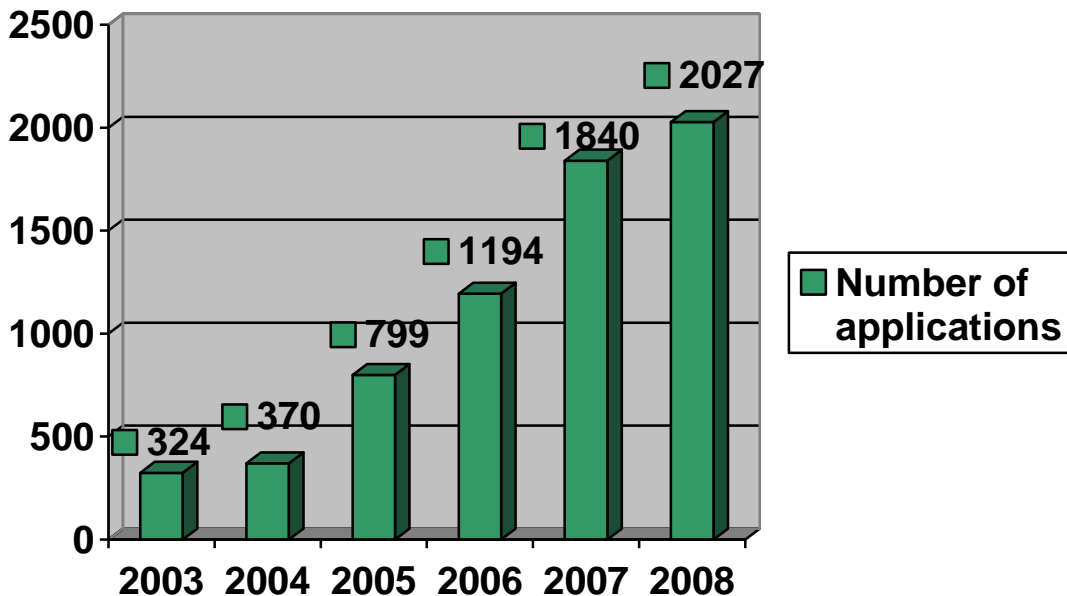
Growth of service from 2003 - 2008

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland assumed the role of the Irish ENIC-NARIC in 2003. Since then the Executive has recorded the number of applications received on an annual basis. The service has grown steadily since 2003 with the number of applications increasing each year. A rapid rise in application numbers occurred in 2005, nearly doubling the number of applications received in comparison to the previous year.

It is evident from the current numbers that the service is still very much in demand. The increase in numbers is attributable to some degree to the service's active engagement with stakeholder and to the fact that the Executive had developed a coherent communications strategy. The result of all this is that the work of the Executive and in particular the work of the recognition service is becoming more widely recognised.

The graph presented below is representative of the number of applications that have been received and logged in each year of the service. The figures do not reflect the number of telephone and email queries received during the years depicted, nor are they reflective of the number of individuals who call to the office during office hours. Further information on the number of queries dealt with by the Executive in 2008 is included under the *Break down of numbers* on p.12.

Development of the recognition service from 2003 – 2008



Break down of numbers, 2008

A total of 2,027 applications were received over the year. The number of applications increased in 2008 by just over 9%, showing a modest increase in the number of users of the service. In addition, the Executive also deals with a large volume of queries via email, phone and visitors to the office. These are estimated to amount to approximately 10,000 queries annually which are processed by the recognition service with assistance from other executive staff. This estimate is based on the number of queries that were recorded by members of the recognition service between March and August of 2008. The queries recorded from this five month time-frame were then projected to provide a more accurate reflection of the volume of queries received on a yearly basis. The Executive is at the early planning stage of introducing a suitable system for recording queries of this nature so that accurate statistics can be produced on a regular basis.

Summary

The following pages provide information on the categories of applications received and information on the volume as well as the main countries from which applications are received.

It is of note that the majority of applications received were closed and commented on within the 12 week time-frame that is stipulated to applicants. More importantly, there is a demonstrable connection between the number of applications closed within a 1-2 week timeframe and the CEPs that have been completed. With completed CEPs, the research component generally required for each application is significantly reduced, meaning that applications can be logged, checked and closed off immediately. This in turn means that more time is available to conduct research on awards from countries that we have limited experience in dealing with. As the year progressed and more CEPs were completed, there was a marked improvement in the turn-around times of applications as depicted in the snapshots provided by the graphs.

It is also important to note that the Executive processes applications from EU and Non-EU countries alike. This means that the recognition service may be conducting research into any number of education systems. For example, in higher education in 2008, 1288 applications were received and these concerned awards from 95 countries. This again reinforces the value of CEPs – the more profiles that are in place the faster applications can be dealt with and consequently there is more time available to research other awards and education systems.

In 2008, the recognition service focused considerable attention on the recognitions website, aiming to create a website that is user-friendly, containing easy to find and up to date information on the recognition service, as well as information on the education systems in other countries. Some telephone and email queries were directed to the website as the information requested was contained within the site. In the last quarter of 2008, the recognition website was viewed 41,000 times. The majority of traffic was concerned with seeking information on how to avail of the service. The international qualifications database has also seen an increase in traffic to its pages, and it is hoped

that with the continued development of CEPs this trend will continue as more and more people seek and find relevant information on the website.

Applicants who are dissatisfied with the advice issued by the recognition service can avail of the reassessment process that is in place. This year 14 applications for reassessment were received and all of them have been closed. A more detailed examination of the reassessment applications can be viewed in Appendix 1. The reassessment process consists of three stages at present, although the recognition service intends to review and amend the process in 2009 to ensure that it comes more into line with the recommendations contained within the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Applications are processed by one staff member and logged as appropriate. They are then assessed and commented on by the appropriate member of staff. Within the current system, applications can be logged under 1 of 7 headings:

- **Higher Education** – all applications that concern awards that form part of the higher education system in another country are logged under this heading.
- **Further Education** – all applications concerning awards that are of a vocational nature and form part of the vocational education and training system in another country are logged under this heading.
- **Garda Applications** - In 2006 the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland was approached by the Public Appointments Service to assist with determining the comparability of foreign qualifications for the purposes of meeting the minimum entry requirements for An Garda Síochána. Any applications received that stipulate the applicant is seeking recognition for this purpose are logged under this heading.
- **School awards** – All non-Garda applications concerning awards that form part of the school system, be it primary or post-primary are logged under this heading.
- **Teagasc** – the Executive has a role in assessing qualifications for the purposes of meeting the stipulations for tax exemptions regarding the transfer of land as per the Finance Act. Any applications that indicate this as the purpose for the recognition request are logged under this heading.
- **Miscellaneous** – the Executive receives number of applications that do not match the criteria of the above mentioned categories. These could concern applications regarding awards made by professional bodies, Irish awards that are not placed on the Framework and grant applications to name a few.
- **Reassessments** – the Executive makes provision for applicants who are dissatisfied with the comparability statement received in relation to their recognition requests. Reassessment applications are logged under this heading. The process requires a review of the documentation submitted with the original application. Information on the reassessments received in 2008 is located at the end of this section.

The figures from 2008 are analysed further below, within the context of each category, to illustrate the main countries from which applications were received. To compare and contrast, the figures from 2007 are also represented below;

Higher Ed: *1288 applications received in total from 95 countries*

2008	Total 1288	2007 Total 1140
Poland	20% (261 applications)	Poland (281 applications)
Nigeria	9% (116 applications)	Nigeria (84 applications)
Lithuania	7% (92 applications)	Lithuania (65 applications)
India	5% (75 applications)	India (64 applications)
Romania	4% (52 applications)	Romania (56 applications)

Further Ed: *289 applications received in total from 44 countries*

2008	Total 289	2007 Total 294
Poland	19% (56 applications)	Poland (87 applications)
UK	13% (40 applications)	UK (28 applications)
Germany	6% (20 applications)	Germany (21 applications)
Australia	5.5% (16 applications)	Ireland (14 applications)

Garda: *121 applications received in total from 25 countries*

2008	Total 121	2007 Total 119
UK	26 % (32 applications)	China (27 applications)
China	23% (28 applications)	UK (26 applications)
Poland	18% (22 applications)	Poland (22 applications)
Ireland	9% (11 applications)	Ireland (7 applications)

School: *127 applications received in total from 45 countries*

2008	Total 127	2007 Total 123
Poland	15% (19 applications)	Poland (18 applications)
UK	11% (14 applications)	UK (8 applications)
Lithuania	7% (9 applications)	Australia (8 applications)
<i>- Remaining applications fragmented.</i>		

Misc: *161 applications received in total from 31 countries.*

2008	Total 161	2007 Total 154
Ireland	35% (58 applications)	UK (49 applications)
UK	16% (27 applications)	Ireland (36 applications)
Nigeria	8% (14 applications)	Poland (21 applications)
<i>- Remaining applications fragmented.</i>		

Teagasc: *30 applications received in total from 5 countries*

2008	Total 30	2007 Total 10
Ireland	56% (17 applications)	UK (6 applications)
UK	33% (10 applications)	Ireland (4 applications)
Poland	3% (1 application)	

Canada	3% (1 application)
USA	3% (1 application)

Staffing within the service

Organisationally, the Executive operates with two teams: the Corporate and Communications (C & C) team and the Framework Implementation and Qualifications Recognition (FIQR) teams. Both teams work on an integrated basis with cross-team projects. In respect of recognition, the FIQR team is primarily responsible for the management and efficient running of the recognition service. Until May 2008, there were three permanent full time staff members and one temporary full time staff member working within the section. However, due to role changes within the organization, the service currently operates with three full time staff members working specifically within the recognition service. The remaining members of the FIQR team, with assistance from C & C colleagues, provide support, assistance and guidance on an on-going basis.

Highlights from 2008

2008 witnessed an increase in the demands placed on the recognition service on foot of a marked growth in the level of interest from various stakeholders in its work. In this connection, one of the main highlights of the year for the recognition service was the highly successful *Different Roles, Different Responsibilities* conference which was held in November to build relations with the admission officers and international officers in the higher education institutions. Information on the conference is contained in the next section. The team also participated in a number of other events throughout the year at the request of stakeholders. A brief description of a sample of these activities is listed below:

- **Information Meeting for Embassy Officials** – This event was organized the Integration Unit of the Department of Education and Science. The purpose of the event was to provide the embassies with information on the school system in Ireland, on English language classes for adult migrants and on the qualifications recognition service of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. The presentation delivered by the Authority was well received and attendance at this event provided the Authority with useful contacts within the Embassies.
- **University Officers Meeting** – there had been limited engagement with education providers in terms of the work of the service. As the service was becoming established it was felt that now was an appropriate time to meet with providers. The meeting with the university officers took place May and proved to be an extremely fruitful exercise as it set the foundations for continued consultation with the group.
- **IMI Cultural Diversity Bizlab** – the IMI contacted the Executive in 2008 requesting that we meet with this group to present and discuss the role and function of the recognition service in Ireland. The Bizlab group is made up of a cross section of companies operating in Ireland who were experiencing difficulty in cross-referencing qualifications for non-Irish applicant workers. In June a member of the team met with the group and presented on the recognition service. This meeting promoted the

service to a wide selection of employers in Ireland and again useful contacts were made.

- **ENIC-NARIC Annual Meeting** – this meeting was held in June and is attended by all members of the ENIC-NARIC network. It provides an opportunity to discuss issues in the area of recognition and is a useful platform to seek the advice and opinions of our colleagues in other countries. This year Ireland was elected to the NARIC Advisory Board (NAB), which sets the agenda for the annual NARIC meeting and co-works with the ENIC to set the agenda for the annual ENIC-NARIC meeting.
- **Intercultural Education Conference** - the conference was organised by the Department of Education and Science, the Office of the Minister for Integration and the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism. The Executive was invited to speak in relation to the recognition work of the Authority and its continued involvement with framework development on a European level. Following the conference, the Authority was invited to make a presentation on its qualifications recognition service at an event organised as part of a SIF-funded project in Sligo Institute of Technology, which is addressing the difficulties faced by newcomers to Ireland in accessing education.

Different Roles, Different Responsibilities

Following a successful application for funding from the European Union in November 2007, the Executive hosted a one-day conference on the 21 November 2008. The conference was designed specifically for admission and international officers from all higher education and training institutions. For the first time, the recognition service and all of the relevant education and training providers were afforded the opportunity to meet for a common purpose, i.e. to share their respective experiences on the recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland.

A number of aims were articulated ahead of the conference, namely:

- to promote the research completed to date by the Authority on the education systems of other countries, namely China, Poland and Nigeria, and in so doing, to begin discussions with providers on how a consistent national approach to recognition might best be pursued by all those involved in the process
- to create an understanding of the broader societal role the recognition service plays in Ireland, and to strengthen its connections with providers in order to create a two way flow of information and to ensure that a transparent system of recognition is in place nation wide.
- to establish the Irish ENIC-NARIC as an authoritative centre of information on recognition matters
- to increase the engagement with education providers in Ireland more generally for the mutual benefit of the providers and the Authority in helping and serving their clients
- from an institutional perspective, the conference was also intended
 - to clarify the role of the recognition service and to explain the criteria and reasoning behind the comparability decisions outlined in the featured country education profiles and
 - to establish a forum for providers to liaise with the Authority on recognition issues.

The conference was successful, as evinced the very positive feedback the Authority received from participants. It enabled the Executive to present on its work in the area of recognition to date and provided a platform for feedback from this group of stakeholders. As a result, a number of potential projects were identified following the Q and A session at the event. The Executive aims to incorporate a number of priority projects that were identified at the conference into its work plan for 2009 and also to maintain and facilitate contact with this large group of stakeholders. The main actions stemming from the event are listed below;

Actions:

- The list of recognised Chinese higher education institutions, as provided by the Chinese government, is to be circulated to participants.
- It was agreed that the recognition website should provide a direct link to the admissions pages of all higher education institutions. The Executive is to set-up an email account for the network of education providers.
- A discussion took place on the range of attainment available within the leaving certificate examination (across levels 4 and 5 of the NFQ) and it was agreed that information on this matter would be included on the recognition website. The institutions will provide feedback on the 'studying in Ireland' section of the website.
- The institutions expressed a particular interest in assisting with the development of CEPs, and information on the countries selected next for research will be communicated to the group for comment and observation before the research commence.

Issues surrounding the recognition of Irish qualifications abroad were discussed. It seemed that most institutions had dealt with graduates who had experienced difficulty in having their qualifications recognised. The Authority requested feedback from the institutions on this matter so that a dossier could be compiled and interventions made where appropriate.

Issues and areas of concern

Resources

An appropriate level of staffing of the recognition service is one of the key elements in ensuring that a successful, efficient and professional service is delivered. It is of note that the number of staff directly working in the section has remained relatively static in the last number of years, notwithstanding the recorded growth of the service. As such, there is an increasing demand and pressure on resources both in terms of administrative and developmental work within the service. It was noted in the Quality Review report in 2007 that 'the Authority considers that the increasing numbers of applicants for recognition of international qualifications must be carefully monitored in terms of appropriate resourcing'¹. It is fully recognized that in the current economic climate, current staffing levels are not likely to increase. The Executive is committed, however, to exploring new ways to maximize its output within existing resources.

Communications

The Executive had developed a communications strategy which was implemented in 2008 and involved television and radio communications as well as attendance at a variety of events, conferences and seminars. However, in the current economic climate the Authority will revisit the communications strategy and explore new and more efficient ways of expanding its client base.

¹ Quality Review of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, Self Evaluation Report. p. 50

Public Appointments Service

The Executive has been working with the PAS in relation to recruitment advertisements and the provisions made therein for referencing awards in the Framework. It also has an advisory role in relation to certain competitions, in which the Executive has been asked to assess foreign qualifications to ascertain if they meet the education requirements as outlined by the PAS. This input has in recent years resulted in the Executive assuming a role of information provider for competitions and has placed certain and, at times, inordinate demands on the workload of the recognition service. It is important that the Executive continues to engage with the PAS to resolve this issue and to ensure that current work practices and procedures in this area are amended to improve working practices for both the PAS and the Authority and its stakeholders.

What is in store for 2009?

- The recognition service, and the Executive in its entirety, is looking forward to the implementation of a new shared database in 2009 which promises to improve and develop current working systems, especially with regard to the service receiving support from a management information system. A pilot phase of this system is due to be implemented within the recognition service in March 2009. Following successful completion of this phase, the system is expected to roll-out across the organisation.
- Having now experienced the benefits of developing country education profiles, the FIQR team, along with colleagues from the C&C team, will continue this line of work. The difference this has made to the work of the service is immeasurable as applications relating to countries that have been researched as part of a CEP are now closed within 1-2 weeks of receipt. This has significantly increased the number of applications that can be dealt with on an 'instant response' basis, meaning that the service receives less enquiries about the status of applications.
- It is essential to the maintenance and development of the service that the contacts made with education providers in 2008 are maintained and enhanced in 2009 so that there is steady movement towards the achievement of national consistency within the field of recognition. Further collaboration with providers is envisaged for this year and already there are possible projects emerging that would ensure this relationship continues to grow, most notably in cross collaboration in the area of CEPs.

Anticipated trends and developments

Given the current economic climate, the recognition service acknowledges that the number of immigrants coming to Ireland has fallen in the past year while the number of emigrants has also increased². This change in climate will obviously have an impact on the recognition service although to what extent is difficult to say at this early stage. It is clear from the statistics that in the first few years of operation the service did not reach its full potential market and, given this, it is unlikely that the figures from 2008 reflect the maximum number of clients that may wish to avail of the service. With this in mind, the Executive will continue to monitor and examine the number of applications and queries received to ascertain if the figures fall, stabilize or increase as the year progresses.

One area of work in which a decrease in applications is anticipated is the recognition requests pertaining to the Garda recruitment campaign. According to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform³, fewer people will be recruited due to the weakening of Government finances. The Minister has indicated that previous plans to recruit 400 new Gardaí a year will be reconsidered. If this is the case, then the Executive can consequently expect a reduction in the number of applications submitted within this area.

The rise in unemployment which has been predicted in 2009⁴ may lead to further changes within the service. Again it is difficult to anticipate whether this will impact upon the service in terms of increased or decreased demand. It may well be the case that as competition for jobs increases, migrants in Ireland who were previously in employment without ever availing of the service may now find it an appropriate time to seek recognition of their awards.

² Central Statistics Office; Population and Migration Estimates. Published August 2008.

³ C Lally. *Garda numbers to fall as economic conditions worsen*. The Irish Times, 4 January 2008.

⁴ Economic and Social Research Institute. *Quarterly economic commentary, winter 2008*. p.33.

Appendix 1

Reassessment Applications received in 2008

The review process currently engaged by Qualifications Recognition - Ireland consists of three stages:

1. Information Provision
2. Formal Reassessment
3. Formal Review

Information Provision

The aim of the advice provided by Qualifications Recognition Ireland is to clearly set out how the foreign qualification held by an individual compares to a qualification that is placed at a particular level on the National Framework of Qualifications. In the majority of cases applicants find the information to be clear in its content. In some more complex cases applicants are seeking clarification on points made in the advice issued and these can be addressed with an early response either via e-mail or telephone.

Formal Reassessment

In 2008, 14 applications were received requesting formal reassessment of their qualifications, 8 related to higher education qualifications, 3 related to further education qualifications, 2 related to miscellaneous applications, 1 related to a Garda application and 1 related to an award assessed in 2007.

8 out of the 14 resulted in amendments to the original advice issued.

All of the 14 applications received have been commented on and closed. There has been no indication from the applicants involved that there is intention to proceed further and avail of the formal review process in place. As a result no formal review applications were received in 2008.