



Welcome to the second edition of the year for **Qualifications Recognition** - our newsletter concerning the work of the national service responsible for coordinating the academic recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland. In addition, the service provides general advice on Irish qualifications to various stakeholders and the public, including information on the recognition of Irish qualifications abroad.

We hope this newsletter will be useful to you and any queries or observations are very welcome. We can be contacted by email at info@qualrec.ie or by telephone on (01) 8871500. Personal contact details for the team are available on www.qualrec.ie.

Niamh Lenehan / William O'Keeffe.

Lisbon Recognition Convention

Perhaps the most fundamental 'best practice guide' for us in terms of achieving "fair recognition" of foreign qualifications is the **Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC)** which was ratified by Ireland in 2004. It is of note that current best practice in recognition is outlined in the 'Revised Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications' published in 2010 following adoption by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee. Reference is also made to the use of Qualifications Frameworks (QFs) in this supplementary text which can be accessed on www.enic-naric.net in the 'Reference Documents' section.

Updated Guide to Comparing Qualifications in the UK and Ireland

The '**Qualifications can cross boundaries**' leaflet which provides information on how qualifications in the UK and Ireland broadly compare to each other was updated in July and can be downloaded from our website, www.qualrec.ie. Examples of major qualifications at each level on the respective Qualifications Frameworks are given together with information on how these Frameworks relate to the over-arching Bologna and EQF Frameworks.

Alignment

The NQAI agreed a policy for the **alignment of awards** (delivered in Ireland) of UK awarding bodies to the Irish NFQ in 2006. To date, 20 UK bodies have had awards aligned; the main purpose of the process being to provide learners with clear information regarding qualifications and the level at which they best fit on the NFQ. Listings of these awards can be accessed on www.nfq.ie in the section 'Awards in the Framework'.

Recognition of Prior Learning Report

The University Framework Implementation Network (FIN) was jointly established by the NQAI and the IUA in 2007 to deepen implementation of the NFQ within the university sector, primarily through the exchange of experience and practice between members. The network has just published a second report entitled '**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in the University Sector: Policies, case studies and issues arising**'. The report sets out national and international policy and discourse on RPL and through a number of case studies describes examples of RPL policies and practices within the Irish university sector today. The experiences of members of the FIN inform the concluding part of the report which also offers a number of principles which may be considered by higher education institutions as they further develop RPL. An interactive and a soft copy of the report are available from the FIN website, www.nfqnetwork.ie.

International / Placement Officers' Event

The Higher Education Authority (HEA), in its capacity as the National Agency for the Lifelong Learning Programme - Erasmus, met international/placement officers representing 19 higher education institutions on 16 June in Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) to discuss ongoing work and priorities. Representatives of the NQAI were invited to provide a presentation on **Qualifications Recognition and Europass**, with particular emphasis on the Mobility document. There is now a software tool available for issuing the document which has been developed by CEDEFOP. There were queries on how the Mobility document may be used to better capture learning resulting from partaking in the Erasmus programme as opposed to the traditional transcript. It was pointed out that use of the Europass Mobility document is encouraged in documentation relating to the Erasmus programme. Further discussion occurred on the possibility that the Mobility document may be used to record the learning agreement integral to the Erasmus programme for an individual in order to avoid duplication of effort. Institutions were invited to contact the NQAI if interested in testing the Mobility software tool or if they have any further queries. Reference was also made to the Diploma Supplement as a means of recording details of an Erasmus Mobility experience, perhaps in Section 6 – Additional Information.

New Title for University Initial Post-Primary Teaching Qualification

In the context of ongoing implementation of the NFQ, and following detailed consultation between the universities and the NQAI, the initial post-primary teaching qualification, hitherto known as the Higher Diploma in Education and latterly as the Graduate or Postgraduate Diploma in Education, is to be formally included in the NFQ at Level 8 as the Professional Diploma in Education with immediate effect for the 2011/12 academic year. See www.nqai.ie for further information.

Amalgamation

As you may be aware, the Authority is to be amalgamated with FETAC and HETAC as indicated by The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill which was published on 27 July 2011. The new organisation will also incorporate the functions of the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) The Bill provides for the transfer of the legislative functions of the existing four bodies to the new organisation, which is currently titled **Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland (QQAI)**. The Bill can be accessed on the DES website, www.education.ie.