

The 'Recognition of prior learning (validation)' and our National Framework of Qualifications: opening doors, making pathways for everyone

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Welcome- fáilte- to Ireland

Population- approaching 6 million
1 in 6 of us not born here- swift cultural shifts- migration flows-
well qualified [NARIC Ireland 2023 & 2024 statistics on the recognition of foreign qualifications | Quality and Qualifications Ireland](#)

Jack, Noah and Rían, or Sophie, Éabha or Grace are the most popular baby names last year (Fertility rate of 1.54%)
Bulk of population between 25-64 years

Full employment
Open economy
Foreign Direct Investment- x4 EU ave.
Strong commitment to education and training culturally

Challenges include concerning gaps in wealth and poverty,
systemic infrastructural challenges- high numbers of children
living in and at risk of poverty / consistent poverty

[Measuring Ireland's Progress | CSO Ireland](#)



A National Qualifications Framework with which we talk to the world

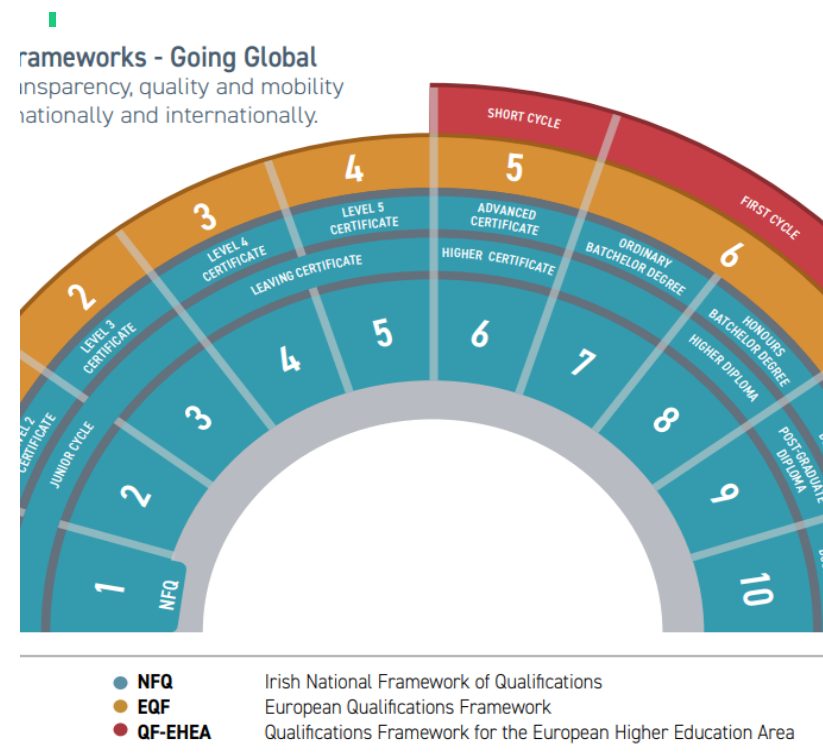
National Qualifications Framework established in 2003

- Ten levels, level indicators
- Award types- different classes, volumes
 - Major,
 - Minor,
 - Special purpose,
 - Supplemental,
 - professional-
 - may introduce for micro-credentials

Vision- for the recognition of all learning and the inclusion of all learners, to show the relationship between qualifications and to provide for access, transfer and progression between awards and programmes.

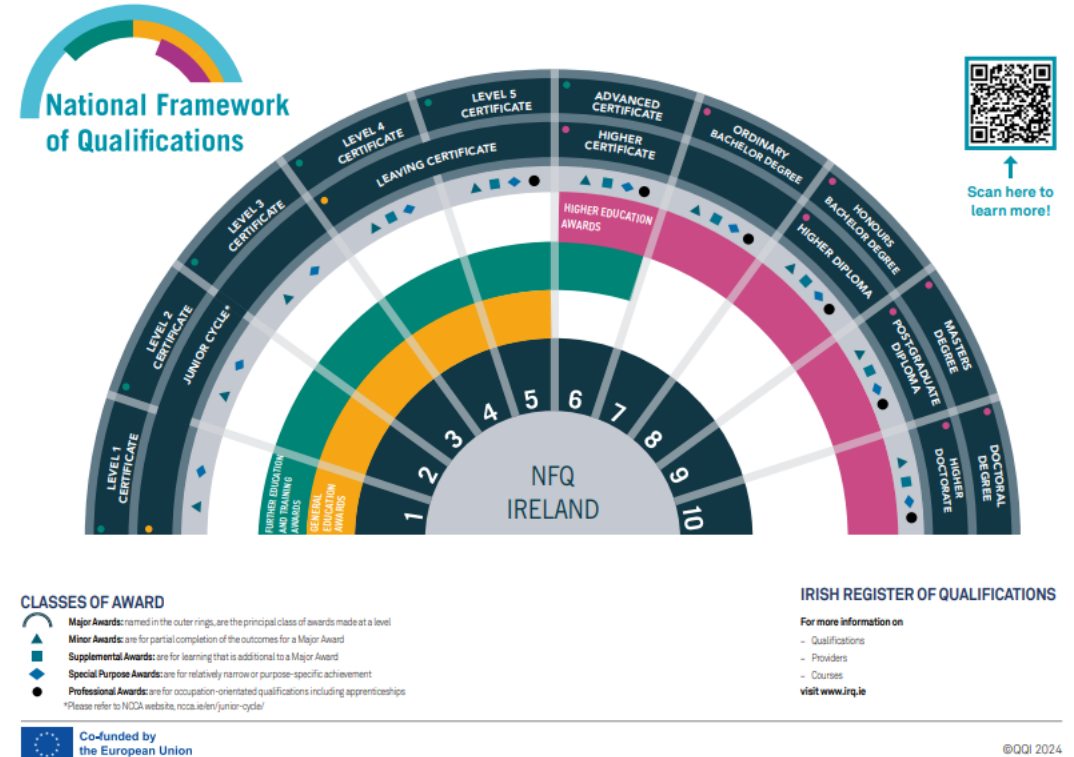
Referenced to the European Qualifications Framework and compatible with the European Higher Education Area(EHEA)

Principles and operational guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning (2005)



It's the law!

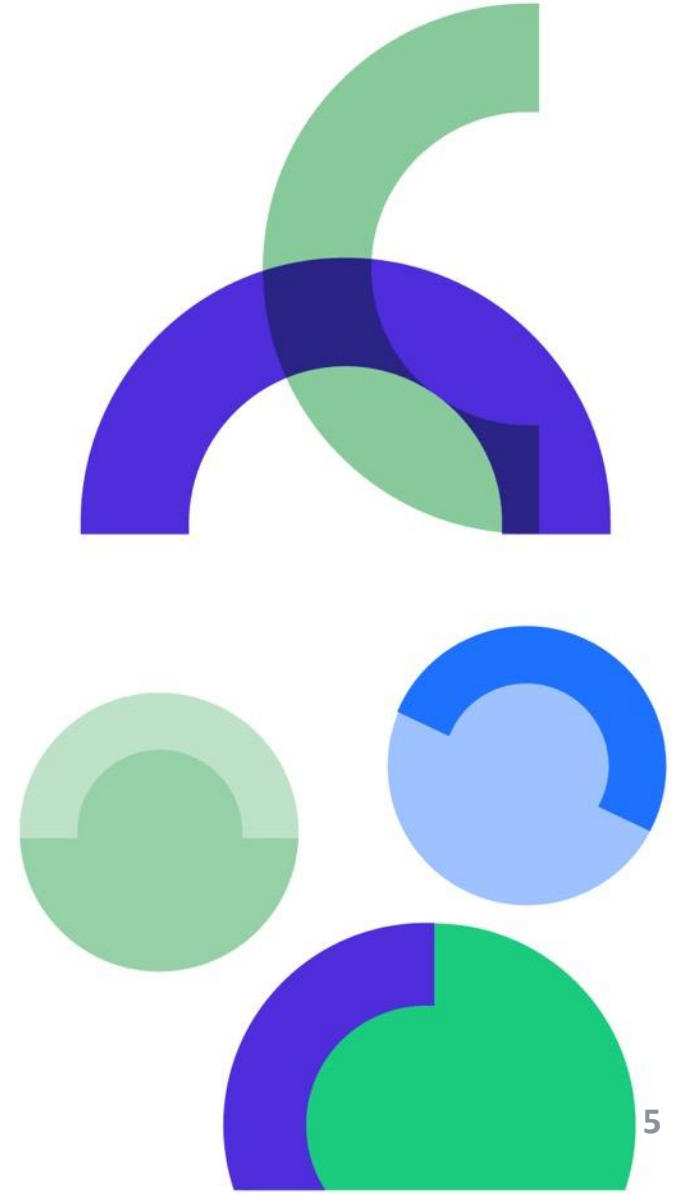
- Learners have an **entitlement to recognition and the award of qualifications following learning howsoever acquired, subject to appropriate assessment against standards, without being enrolled in programmes.**
- **All award types within the NFQ are achievable through RPL**
- **Ethics, integrity and quality assurance standards have to be maintained and demonstrated**
- **Are supported** in the preparation for assessment against awards standards, **through procedures** for the formal assessment of prior learning developed in response to access, transfer and progression (ATP) policy
- Are supported in **lifelong learning** essentially by the Framework and ATP policies
- Have learning **fairly and consistently assessed**
- **Can also achieve credits** as an outcome of the assessment of prior learning



‘Every hand matters’- excellence is inclusive

Policy

- Responsibility for assessment for RPL is largely situated in education and training Institutions and providers. Professional Statutory Recognition Bodies also carry out RPL. Associated with ‘competent recognition authority’ concept.
- Through RPL (validation) people can achieve full and partial awards, credits, exemptions from awards and parts of programmes, access to programmes, advanced entry.
- Providers are required to publish policies for RPL (under the Act, QQI approves /is consulted on ATP, which includes operation of credit, and reviews, including RPL)
- Quality assurance and monitoring is carried out by QQI
- Separate government policy supports and monitors equity and inclusion (NATIONAL ACCESS PLAN- A STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR EQUITY OF ACCESS, PARTICIPATION AND SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION 2022-2028)



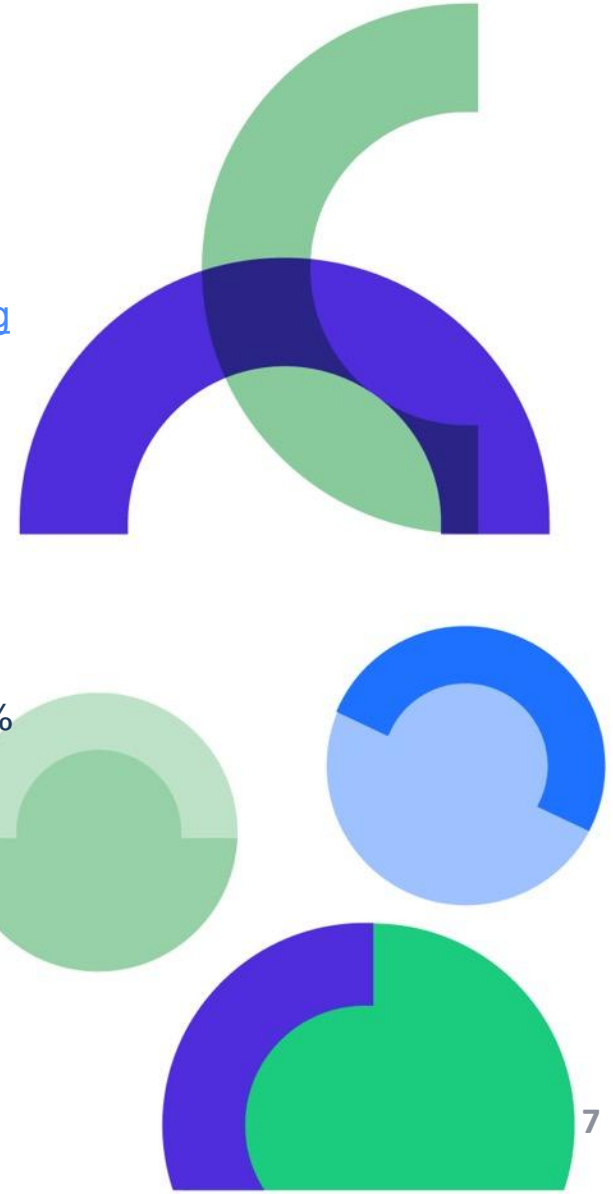
Policy and practice- an organic approach

- QQI – established in 2012- period of transformation, new infrastructure nationally in education and training in both higher and FET (VET)
- Consultation resulted in prioritisation of policies for review and did not include revised ATP or RPL. This is happening now in the context of NFQ review.
- 2012 Council Recommendation for the Validation of nonformal and informal learning, and subsequent European Guidelines for Validation (RPL) were embedded in Core QA Guidelines, including for the validation of programmes.
- Established the RPL Practitioner Network Ireland [RPL Practitioners Network Ireland](#) included cross sectoral representatives, public and private institutions and providers, industry, civil society, volunteer and youth service associations, community groups to support and connect practice, inform policy, develop consensus. QQI supported. #grateful- lead practitioners e.g. [MTU Extended Campus – Home](#) and [Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\) – Donegal ETB](#) and pillar associations, IUA, THEA, ETBI, FESS, Aontas. Webinars, Events. *Join the conversation on our LinkedIn page.* (everything is FREE) [Webinar Review: Learning Unlocked – RPL and the Learner Experience – RPL Practitioners Network Ireland](#)
- Next generation sectoral networks- extraordinary work! FET Network with Education and Training Boards Ireland ([ETBI – Representing ETBs](#)) and the national project, RPL in HE, [Home | Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\)](#)

RPL – models in practice, who is benefitting?

Services are situated, supported and connected differently, and are at different stages of development and implementation:

- Quality Assurance, Admissions, **Strategic Relationships**, Extended Campus
- Roles include: Applicant, supported by Mentor, Guidance Counsellor / Career Advisor, Assessor (Subject Matter Expert), Information Officers/Liaison/outreach roles, Administration and Quality Assurance roles
- [RPL Stories | Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\)](#) ; [MTU Extended Campus - Recognition of Prior Learning and Work Based Learning](#) ; [SETU | Recognition of prior learning](#)
- Working with higher education institutions and RPL processes, access, advanced entry with credits or exemptions can be achieved, restoring confidence and shortening the pathway to a degree or masters qualification for the individual. For business, a development and support partnership.
- In Extended Campus models, a 'Learning Clinic' partners with industry to harness employee interest in personal development, and works with HR and R&D to **develop programmes to support the industry develop further within the region. Education providers as strategic learning partners.**
- **The best employee is the one you already have.** [Ronan Emmet RPL](#) Boston Scientific- buy v build- 62% internal promotion! **The business case for RPL is clear.** Average length of service- 13 years. (Recommends- build an RPL brand *that works for Uzbekistan!*)



RPL – models in practice, who is benefitting?

Further education and training / VET

- 16 regional Education and Training Boards, representative body, ETBI, active in RPL

[What a Complete Education! – Episode 6 – ETBI](#) Learner stories- RPL in redundancy, onwards to a degree, #firstinfamily!

- Active with industry and for inclusion, integration, career planning and advancement, e.g. [Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\) | College of FET](#)
- Transforming approaches to Craft Apprenticeship- RPL for access, Advanced Entry and Major Award
- A common toolkit used adaptively across the sector [Toolkit for Education and Training Providers](#)
- Connecting with Regional Skills For a [Regional Skill Fora | National Enterprise Hub](#) to deliver on the National Skills Strategy and using Skills and Labour Market data for sustainable employment opportunities



RPL – who is benefitting?

When everyone is recognised and acknowledged, everyone wins.

‘RPL is not just an acronym or an abbreviation. Recognition is the foundation of the good life, an emancipatory project. Recognition is the glue of a free society, because the political is personal.’

Dr Ted Fleming

(Read the article at plaio.org)

Thank you!

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