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**Higher Education and the
Bologna Process
Role of Student Bologna Experts**

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Madrid April 2013

Commencement

- Bologna Declaration signed in June 1999 by Ministers for Education of 29 countries
- Included all EU countries (then 15)
- Overall aim was a coherent European Higher Education Area by 2010
- Although noting the autonomy of universities, this was a reform process led by Ministers

Objectives

- A system of easily readable and comparable degrees
- Adoption of system based on two cycles, undergraduate and graduate
- A system of credits such as ECTS
- Promotion of mobility
- European co-operation in QA
- Promotion of European Dimension in HE

Other Objectives

- Introduction of shorter cycle Bachelor degrees in countries where they were not a feature e.g. Germany, Italy
- Improved competitive position vis a vis USA in attracting non-European students
- Bachelor degree to be relevant to European labour market

Prague Communiqué, 2001

- Now 32 countries in process
- Three new points added:
 - Need for Lifelong Learning Policies
 - Role of students and student representative bodies
 - Importance of enhancing attractiveness of European HE to students from Europe and other parts of world

Berlin Communiqué, 2003

- Membership now 40 countries including Russia
- Set objectives for next 2 years for:
 - Quality Assurance
 - Degree Structure: all countries to have 2-cycle system by 2005
 - Diploma Supplement to be issued to all
- Recognised Doctoral level as 3rd Cycle

Bergen Communique, 2005

- Five new members, total now 45
- Commitment to adoption of national frameworks of qualifications by 2010
- Adoption of standards and guidelines for QA
- Urged action on recognition of degrees and study periods
- Emphasised importance of research and structured doctoral programmes

London Communique, 2007

- Reviewed progress on mobility, degree structure, recognition, Qualification Frameworks (latter to be completed by 2010)
- Sought to align Bologna with European Research Area
- Set priorities for 2007-09 to complete 3-cycle system, QA and recognition
- Requested more work on data collection, mobility, employability and stock-taking

Louvain-la-Neuve, 2009

- 46 countries participated
- Delegates from 15 non-participating countries included China, Japan, USA.
- Emphasised need to widen participation in HE via Lifelong Learning including part-time studies and Work-Based Learning
- Development of NFQ and compatibility with over-arching Framework by 2012
- Next meetings arranged for Bucharest 2012 then 2015, 2018, 2020

Budapest Vienna Declaration 2010

- Welcomed Kazakhstan as new member
- Launched the EHEA as envisaged in Bologna Declaration
- Cited Bologna Process as an unprecedented example of regional, cross-border cooperation in higher education that made European Higher Education more visible on global map.
- Recommitted to academic freedom as well autonomy and accountability as principles of EHEA.

Budapest-Vienna 2

- Acknowledged the key role of institutional leaders and teachers, researchers and administrative staff and students in making EHEA a reality. They fully supported staff and student participation in decision-making structures.
- Re-affirmed that higher education is a public responsibility and is a major driver for social and economic development and for innovation.
- Asked the Bologna Follow-Up Group to propose measures to facilitate full implementation of Bologna principles including peer learning and study visits.
- New website www.ehea/info/

Bucharest 2012

Ministers agreed to focus on 3 main goals:

- To provide quality higher education to more students
- To better equip students with employable skills
- To increase student mobility (at least 20% of European graduates in 2020 should have been on a study or training period abroad)

National Qualification Frameworks

- All countries were supposed to publish NFQ by 2010 but some slippage
- NFQ must be compatible with Bologna Framework; Ireland was first to demonstrate this (in 2006)
- NFQ must also be compatible with EQF
- NFQ benefits learners by making explicit where qualifications stand

Frameworks of Qualifications

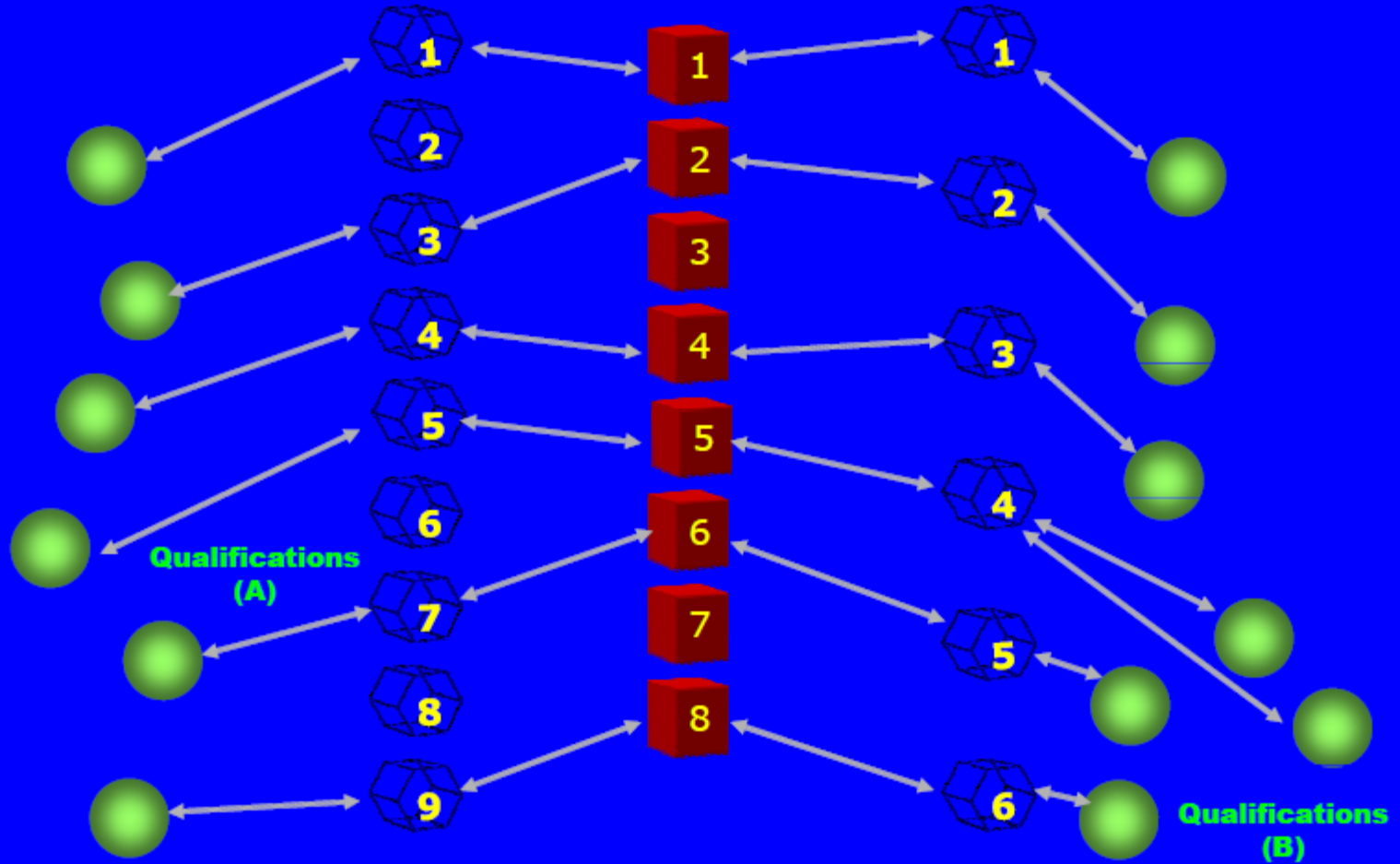
EQF and Bologna Framework

EQF Levels	Bologna Framework
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	Short cycle within the first cycle
6	First Cycle
7	Second Cycle
8	Third Cycle



Country A

Country B

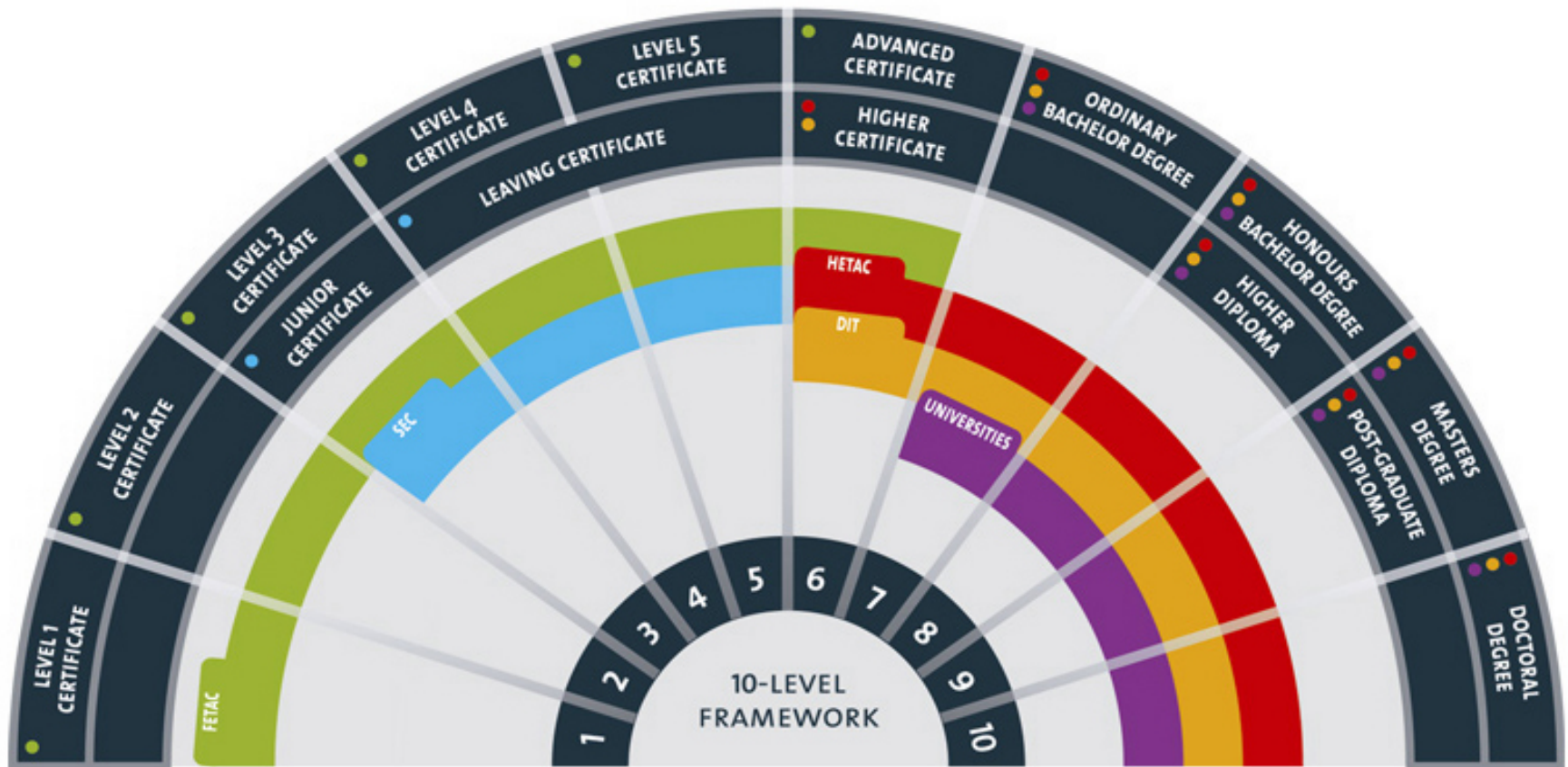


Ireland's NFQ: Titles of Awards

Level

- 10 – Doctoral Degree
- 9 – Master's Degree & Post-graduate Diploma
- 8 – Honours Bachelor Degree & Higher Diploma
- 7 – Ordinary Bachelor Degree
- 6 – Advanced Certificate & Higher Certificate
- 5 – Level 5 Certificate
- 4/5 – Leaving Certificate
- 4 – Level 4 Certificate
- 3 – Level 3 Certificate & Junior Certificate
- 2 – Level 2 Certificate
- 1 – Level 1 Certificate

The National Framework of Qualifications – award-types and awarding bodies



Bologna Process: Participating countries

 [Albania](#)

 [Andorra](#)

 [Armenia](#)

 [Austria](#)

 [Azerbaijan](#)

 [Belgium](#)

 [Bosnia-Herzegovina](#)

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Impact of Major Initiatives

- The Bologna Process has had major impact in the areas of:
- Degree Structures
- A System of Credits (ECTS)
- Quality Assurance
- Student Mobility
- National Qualifications Frameworks
- Recognition of Qualifications

Degree Structures

- Implementation of a structure of degrees at Bachelor, Master's and Doctoral level hugely important
- It did not involve much change for UK or Ireland
- It helps to provide a transparent system for learners, especially those outside Europe
- It aids transferability and mobility

Quality Assurance

- Bologna Process has led to the agreement of Standards & Guidelines for QA in Europe
- ESG now being revised
- There is now a European QA Register for Higher Education
- Irish Higher Education Quality Network established to share best practice [HEA, IUQB, DIT, HETAC, USI, DES]

Student Mobility

- BP facilitated greater mobility by students
- Easier to transfer credits when all HEIs use the same system (ECTS)
- Mutual recognition of awards makes it easier for students to move
- New target for mobility is 20% of all graduates to have studied abroad for at least part of programme by 2020 (very challenging for many countries)

Recognition

- Within countries, NFQ is an important tool of recognition of learning
- Between countries, compatibility of frameworks with EQF and Bologna framework is an aid to recognition
- Diploma Supplements for all graduates are meant to aid recognition of awards throughout Bologna region (47 countries)
- Lisbon Recognition Convention sought to allow professionals to practise in other countries. New unit in many countries to assist those seeking recognition.

Student Role at International Level

- Critical role of the four Es:
 - ENQA (European Association of QA)
 - EUA (European Universities Association)
 - Eurashe (European Association for Institutions in Higher Education)
 - ESU (European Students Union)
- Liaise with four Es to ensure full student participation in all Bologna initiatives

Student Role at National Level

- Membership of higher education funding/policy body
- Membership of National Bologna Committee
- Membership of national QA agency
- Membership of higher education quality network (see www.iheqn.ie)
- Ensure students union fully involved

Student Role at Institutional Level

- Membership of Governing Body of university
- Membership of Academic Council/Senate
- Membership of QA Committee
- Membership of programme review panels and institutional review panels
- Student Bologna Experts to work with students' union to ensure participation

Student Role at Programme and School Level

- Appointment of class representatives
- Training of class representatives
- Membership of programme committees for speedy resolution of problems

Role of Student Bologna Experts

- Ensure student interests are represented at international, national, institutional and programme/school level
- Ensure that student issues are considered by national teams of Bologna Experts
- Ensure student representatives are trained for their roles
- Establish good contacts with employer bodies and other stakeholders

Possible Future Developments

- New objectives flagged at Leuven/Louvain
- Issues include Access, LLL, Employability, Student-centred learning, Research, Mobility, Funding, Better Career Services
- Access Targets; a National Access Office to set targets and monitor
- LLL: to be an integral part of education systems; requires strong partnerships with employers; see EUA Charter on LLL
- Employability improved by work placements: relations with employer bodies

Useful websites

- Bologna Communiqués: www.ehea.info/
- NFQ: www.nfq.ie/nfq/en/
- HEA website: www.eurireland.ie
- EUA Charter on LLL(2008): www.eua.be
- ESU: Bologna With Student Eyes 2007, 2009 and 2012 on www.esu-online.org/
- Irish Higher Education Quality Network
www.iheqn.ie/publications/

Questions



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