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Session 8

8th thematic training workshop on skills anticipation and matching 27-28 June, Milan

John O'Connor

Quality and Qualifications Ireland

ETF Working together Learning for life

European Commission

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About QQI

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Session Input

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- The role and contribution of the NFQ within the Ireland's skill and qualifications system
- Quality assurance of the NFQ in a context of increasing diversity of modes of learning and certification
- NFQ, a trusted source of information? The role of qualifications registers.

'qualification' means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent authority determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards' (EU Recommendation on EQF 2017)

The Irish NFQ

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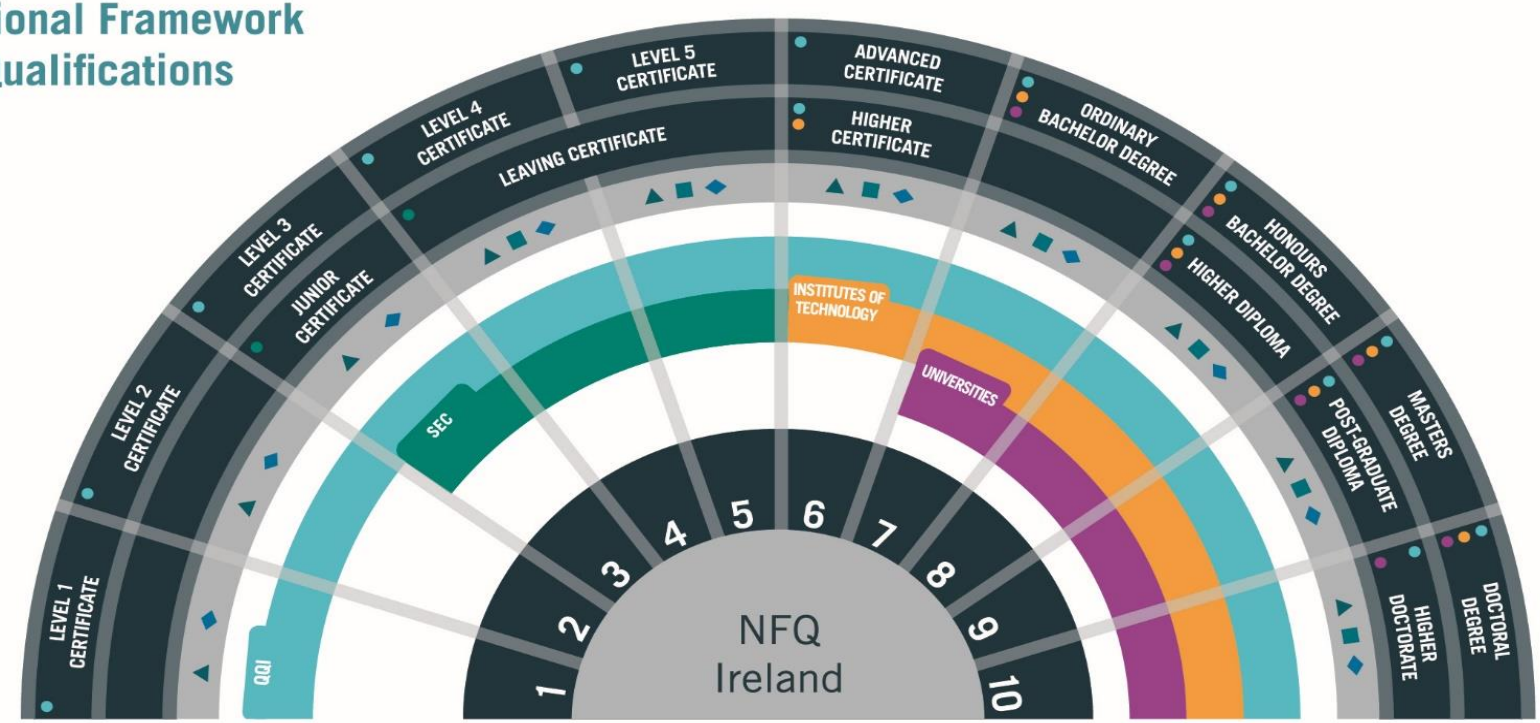
National Framework of Qualifications



AWARDING BODIES

- **Quality and Qualifications Ireland** (QQI) makes awards in further and higher education and training
- **SEC - State Examinations Commission** *(Department of Education and Skills)*
- **Institutes of Technology**
- **Universities**

AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK

There are four classes of award in the National Framework of Qualifications:

Major Awards: named in the outer rings, are the principal class of awards made at a level
Minor Awards: are for partial completion of the outcomes for a Major Award
Supplemental Awards: are for learning that is additional to a Major Award
Special Purpose Awards: are for relatively narrow or purpose-specific achievement

European Qualifications Framework

For further Information consult: www.nfq.ie www.QQI.ie

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NFQ – Internationally Connected

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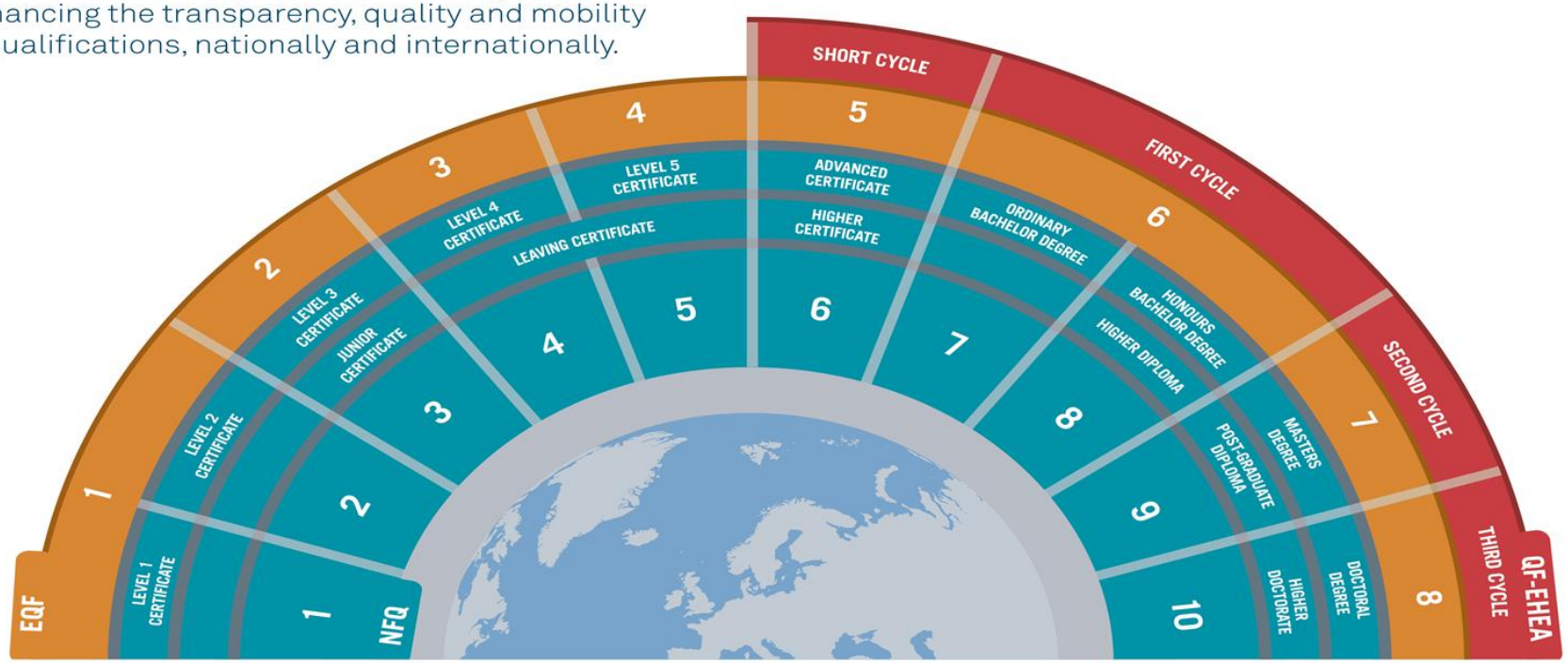
Qualifications Frameworks - Going Global

Enhancing the transparency, quality and mobility of qualifications, nationally and internationally.



NFQ	Irish National Framework of Qualifications
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
QF-EHEA	Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area

European Qualifications Framework

EUROPEAN Higher Education Area

National Framework of Qualifications

For further information consult: www.nfq.ie www.QQI.ie

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Formation of the NFQ

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Celebrating **15 YEARS** of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

2003

National Framework of Qualifications

After an extensive period of public engagement and consultation, the NFQ was established as the single national entity through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other.

2006

The NFQ was self-certified as compatible with the Qualifications Framework in the European Higher Education Area (QF EHEA), the first national Qualification Framework to complete this exercise.

2009

The NFQ was referenced to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning the first national Qualifications Framework to complete this exercise.

2009 Report of the International Panel on Implementation and Impact of the Irish NFQ.

VIEW REPORT

2012

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act reaffirms the statutory basis of the NFQ and entrusts maintenance and development of the NFQ to QQI.

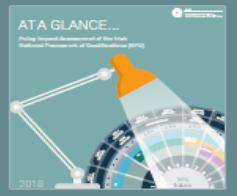
2016

Reflections and Trajectories - Qualifications Policy Insights as a companion paper to the Policy Impact Assessment of the NFQ.

2017

NFQ Policy Impact Assessment.

2018



2018 NFQ Impact Assessment At a Glance.

www.QQI.ie | www.nfq.ie

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NFQ - Taking Stock

- Policy responsiveness
- Awareness and use
- Employer Engagement
- Quality of Levelling Processes
- NFQ access for other awarding bodies
- International Engagement
- Quality of data and analysis
- NFQ Forum

Purpose of the NFQ

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- Promote the use of learning outcomes
- Conceptual order and consensus about what constitutes a qualification
- Acts as a system for classifying qualifications in Ireland
- Defines the relationship between qualifications and supports learners to progress to further education and employment opportunities
- Contribute to public confidence in the quality of qualifications in Ireland
- Contribute to better recognition of qualifications achieved in Ireland
- Act as an enabling tool in relation to Irish Government policy and goals for lifelong learning, internationalisation and skills formation.
- Platform to convene diverse stakeholders in qualifications system

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Growth of NQFs

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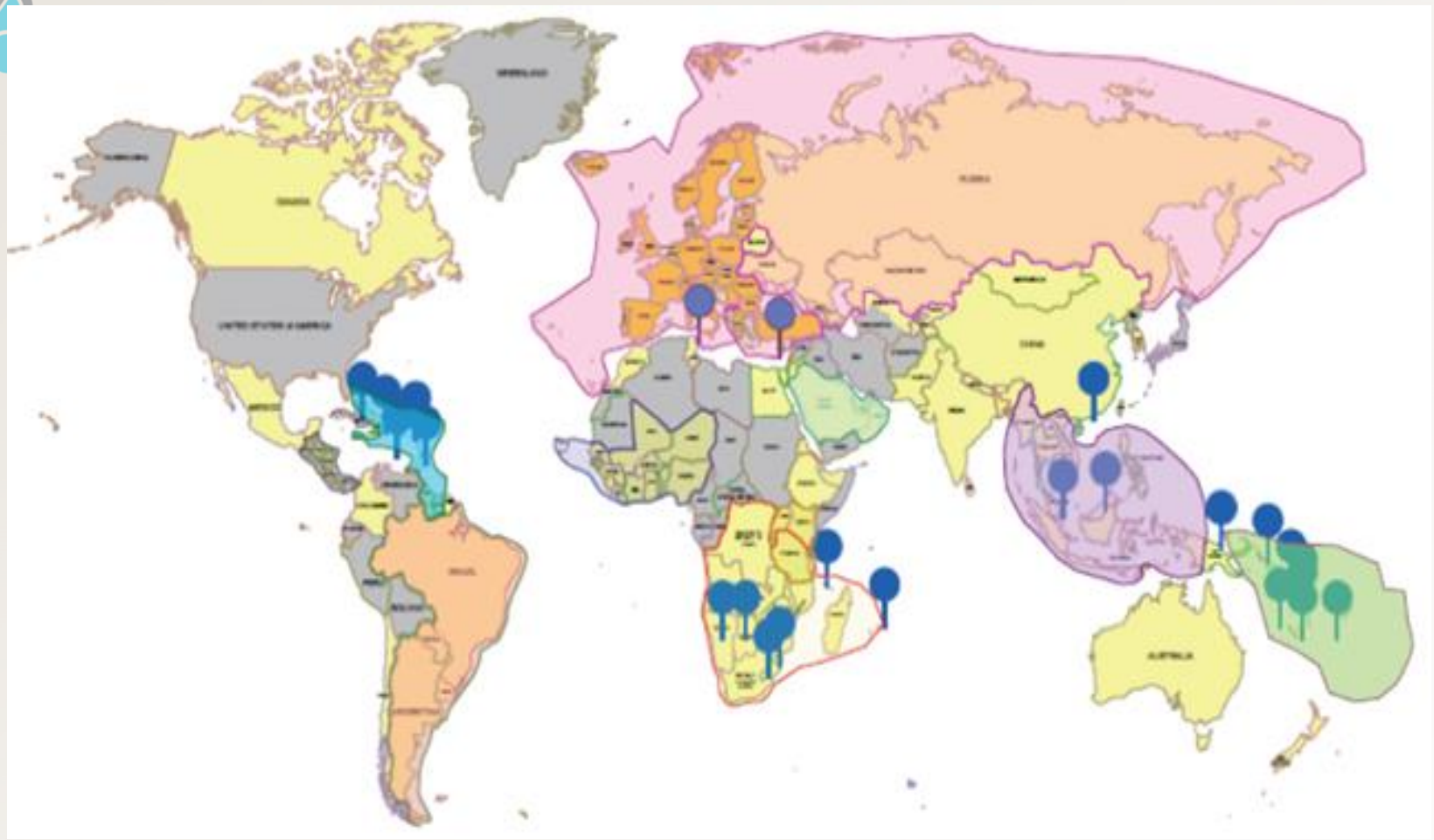

Knowledge for NQF policy and practice

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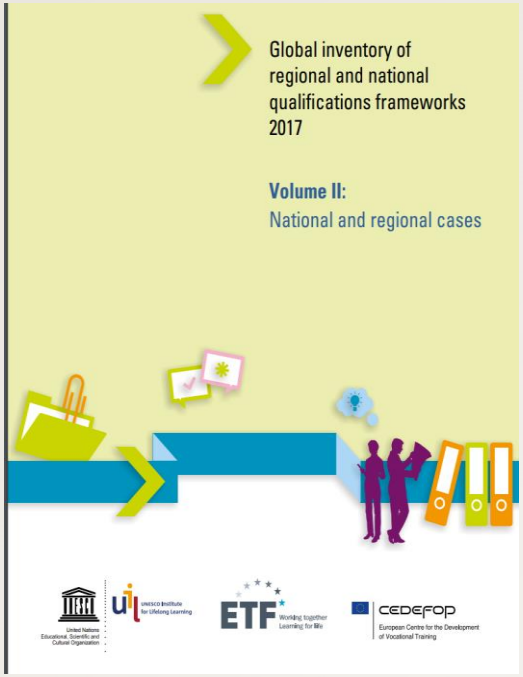

Findings from Meta-Analysis

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- 7 Regional Qualifications Frameworks (Europe, ASEAN, Pacific, Carribean, US and Africa)
- 150 National Qualifications Frameworks
  - Overarching characteristics (Cedefop 2018, UNESCO 2017)
    - Comprehensiveness
    - Loose (integrate sub-frameworks and refrain from uniform rules for design and award of qualifications)
    - Learning Outcomes based level descriptors
  - Purpose
    - Transparency
    - Reform
    - Lifelong learning
  - Conditions for Impact
    - Stakeholder mobilisation
    - Political mandate and integration into mainstream policy processes
    - Sustainability and Visibility
    - Public Confidence

NFQ for Skills Reporting

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Table 1.1 ISCED levels of education, main programmes in Irish education/training, typical awards and NFQ levels

ISCED 2011 Level	Corresponds to:	Typical award	Award NFQ Level
0 Pre-primary education	Early Start and other pre-primary	QQI Certificate	Level 1/2
1 Primary education	Primary education		
2 Lower secondary	2nd level education –Junior Cycle	Junior Certificate	Level 3
3 Upper secondary	2nd level education – Senior Cycle	Leaving Certificate	Level 4
4 Post-secondary non-tertiary	Apprenticeship, PLC courses, other FET[1]	QQI Level 5 Certificate	Level 5
		QQI Advanced Certificate	Level 6
5 Short-cycle tertiary education	Third level – higher certificate/university diploma /new post 2016 apprenticeship	Higher Certificate	
6 Bachelor's degree or equivalent	Third level – ordinary & honours bachelor degree/higher diploma/new post-2016 apprenticeship	Ordinary Degree	Level 7
		Honours Bachelor Degree	Level 8
		Higher Diploma	Level 8
7 Master's degree or equivalent	Third level – master's degree and postgraduate certs/diplomas new post - 2016 apprenticeship	Postgraduate Diploma Master's degree	Level 9
8 Doctor or equivalent	PhD	PhD	Level 10

Source: *Adapted from* ISCED 2011 (UNESCO Institute of Statistics)

NFQ for Skills reporting

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An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh
Central Statistics Office

Table 2 Highest level of education attained by persons aged 15-64, classified by age group, Q2 2015 - Q2 2017

% of persons

		Highest level of education attained									
							Third Level, of which:				
		Primary or below	Lower secondary	Higher secondary	Post Leaving Certificate	Third level (in total)	Higher Certificate or equivalent	Ordinary Degree or equivalent	Honours bachelor degree or equivalent	Postgraduate qualification	Total
	NFQ	None/1/2	3	4/5	4/5/6	6/7/8/9/10	6	7	8	9/10	
Year	Age group										
April to June 2015											
	15-19 years	22	55	21	1	1	0	0	0	0	100
	20-24 years	1	5	54	10	29	2	9	16	2	100
	25-34 years	3	6	26	13	52	4	15	23	10	100
	35-44 years	4	10	22	13	51	4	17	18	11	100
	45-54 years	8	17	25	14	37	4	13	13	7	100
	55-59 years	14	19	26	13	28	3	11	9	6	100
	60-64 years	25	20	22	9	25	3	10	8	4	100
	All persons aged 15 to 64	**9**	**16**	**27**	**11**	**38**	**3**	**12**	**15**	**7**	**100**
April to June 2016											
	15-19 years	20	54	23	2	0	0	0	0	0	100
	20-24 years	2	4	52	12	30	2	9	16	3	100
	25-34 years	3	6	25	14	51	4	14	22	11	100
	35-44 years	4	9	21	14	52	5	17	18	11	100
	45-54 years	9	15	25	14	37	4	13	13	8	100
	55-59 years	14	20	25	12	30	3	11	10	5	100
	60-64 years	22	20	23	10	26	3	10	8	5	100
	All persons aged 15 to 64	**9**	**15**	**26**	**12**	**38**	**3**	**12**	**15**	**8**	**100**

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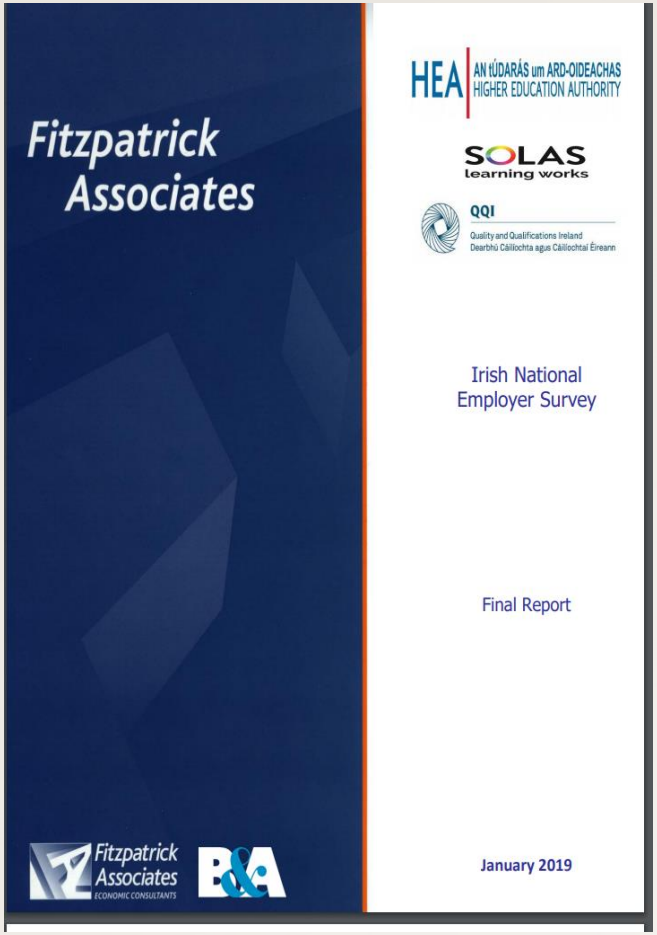
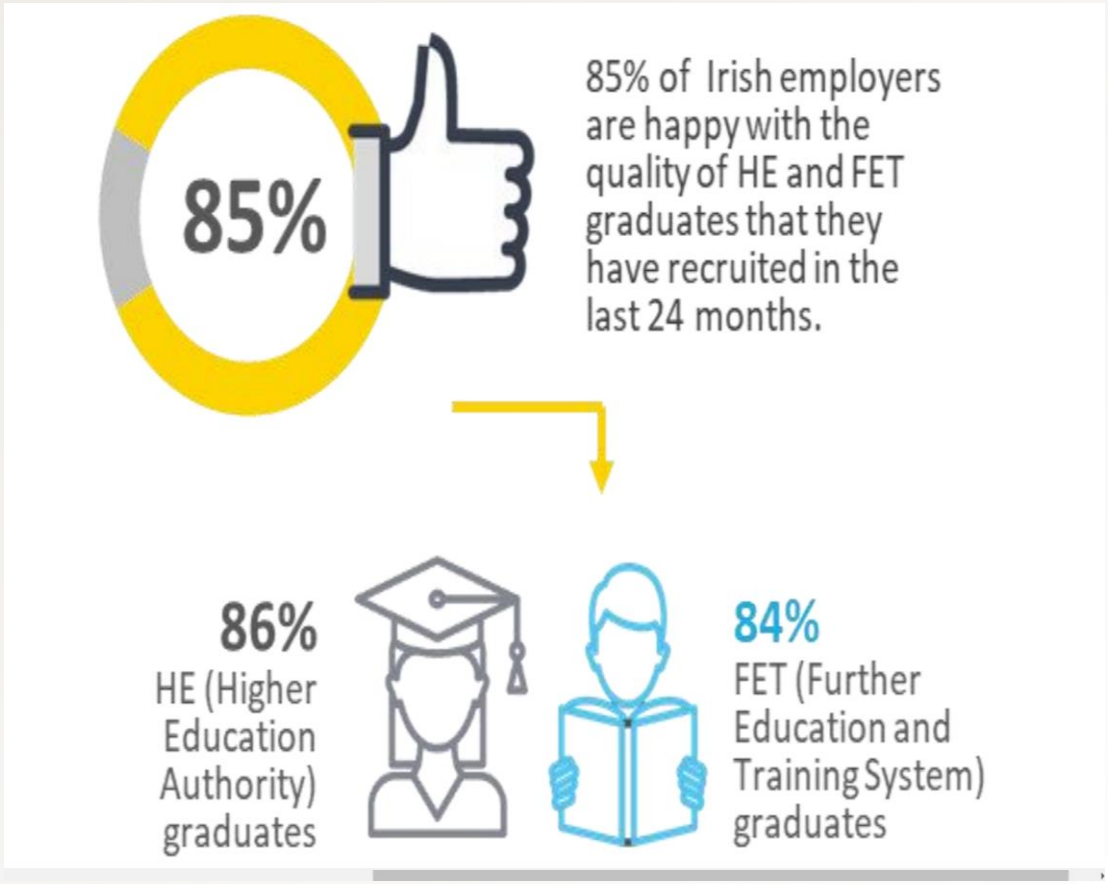
Employers satisfaction

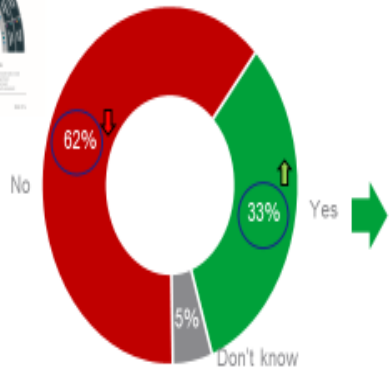




Public awareness of NFQ

Awareness of NFQ has increased significantly this year, following a drop off in 2016. One in three claim to have heard of NFQ; a historical high. Awareness is drive by younger cohorts and those from a professional/white collar background, along with Dubliners

Base: All Adults 15+ (n=1,004)



	Yes, heard of	No, have not heard of	Don't know
2016	22%	73%	4%
2015	27%	68%	5%
2014	19%	78%	3%

Gender	'17 %	'16 %	'15 %	'14 %
Male	34	21	27	21
Female	31	24	26	17

Region	'17 %	'16 %	'15 %	'14 %
Dublin	46	33	28	18
Rest of Leinster	26	16	23	28
Munster	25	13	25	12
Conn/Ulster	32	29	32	19

Age	'17 %	'16 %	'15 %	'14 %
15-17*	47	6	36	15
18-24	54	29	40	27
25-34	41	29	31	26
35-44	38	26	28	19
45-54	31	26	28	22
55-64	25	15	19	12
65+	9	11	13	7

SEG	'17 %	'16 %	'15 %	'14 %
ABs	55	41	36	28
C1s	43	26	36	27
C2s	31	17	24	16
DEs	18	15	17	12
Fs	21	21	21	9

Still in Education	64	27*	52*	n/a	Completed Course in past 2 years	64	56	56	n/a

*Caution: Small Base Size O = Significant difference vs 2016

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Q. Have you heard of the National Framework of Qualifications?

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Recruitment and Qualifications

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Key findings from the survey showed that:

- 71% sometimes find it difficult to find people with the right qualifications
- 74% find the evaluation of foreign qualifications challenging
- 63% were interested in qualifications achieved outside the formal education and training system are important;
- 96% were aware of the NFQ and 54% referred to it during recruitment
- 69% were aware of the EQF and 17% referred to it during recruitment
- EQF level 6 seen as gold standard for entry to employment
- Role of qualifications for work varies by occupation level.

Creeping credentialism?

- Risk of skills mismatch
- Risk of over qualification
- Consequence of skill polarisation (future of EQF level 5 – Intermediate level skills and qualifications)
- Uncertainty about the relevance and quality of qualifications on offer
- Divergence between skills and qualifications?

NFQ and Quality Assurance

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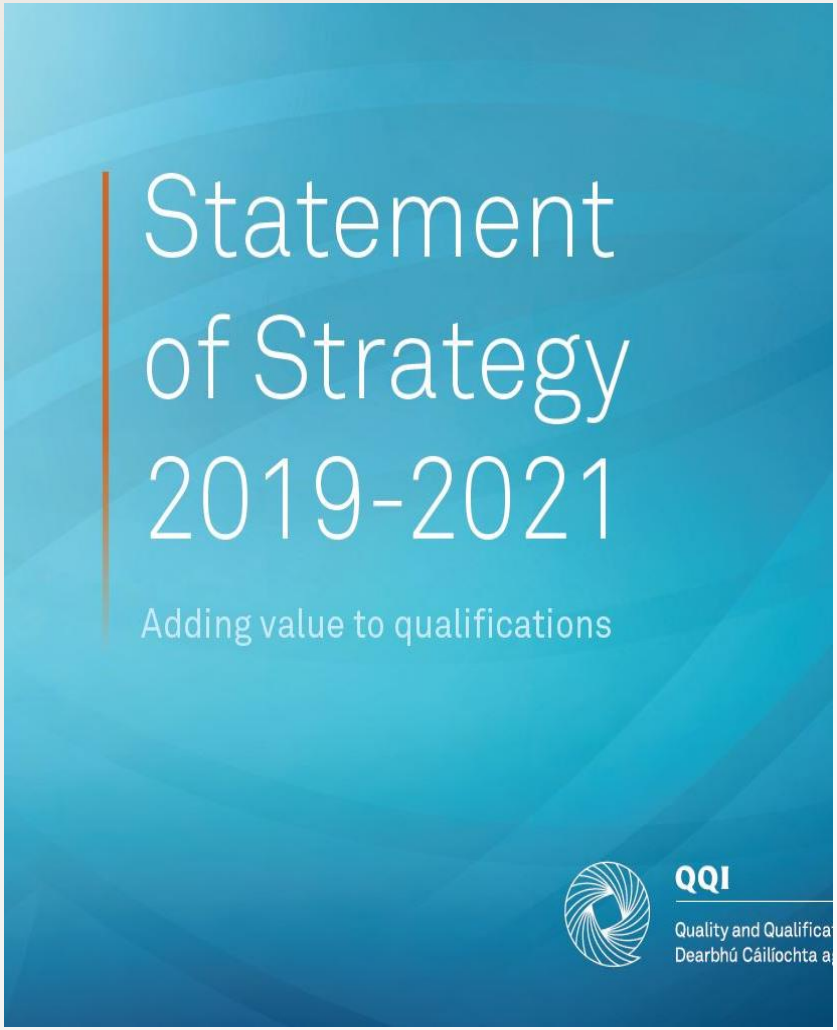
The INTEGRITY of the NFQ

Because qualifications attract significant public and private investment, it is important that the public has confidence in qualifications that are part of the national system.

- ***Trustworthiness*** Confidence in the people and organisations that offer and regulate qualifications.
- ***Quality*** Confidence in procedures that produce assured qualifications, fit for their intended use.
- ***Value*** Confidence that users are at the centre of accessible and relevant qualifications.
- ***Transparency*** Confidence that public information about qualifications is accessible and authoritative

QQI Mission

QQI sustains public ***confidence*** in the quality of education and training, promotes ***trust*** in the National Framework of Qualifications…



European Convergence in Quality Assurance of NQFs

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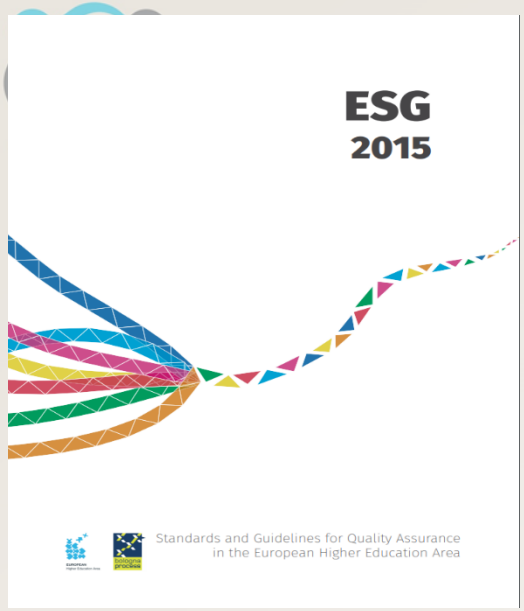

National QA system shaped by European norms

EQAVET
European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
Supporting the implementation of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training

European Qualifications Framework

Quality Assurance - Policy

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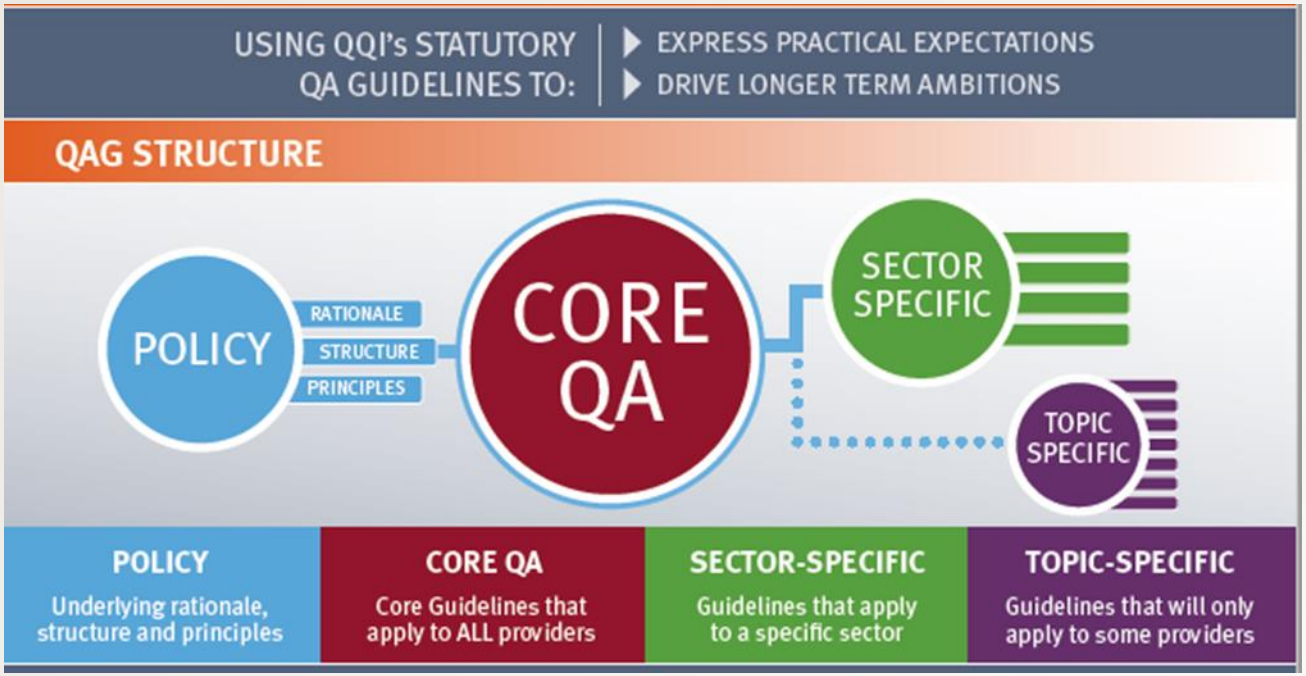

Quality Assurance - Practice

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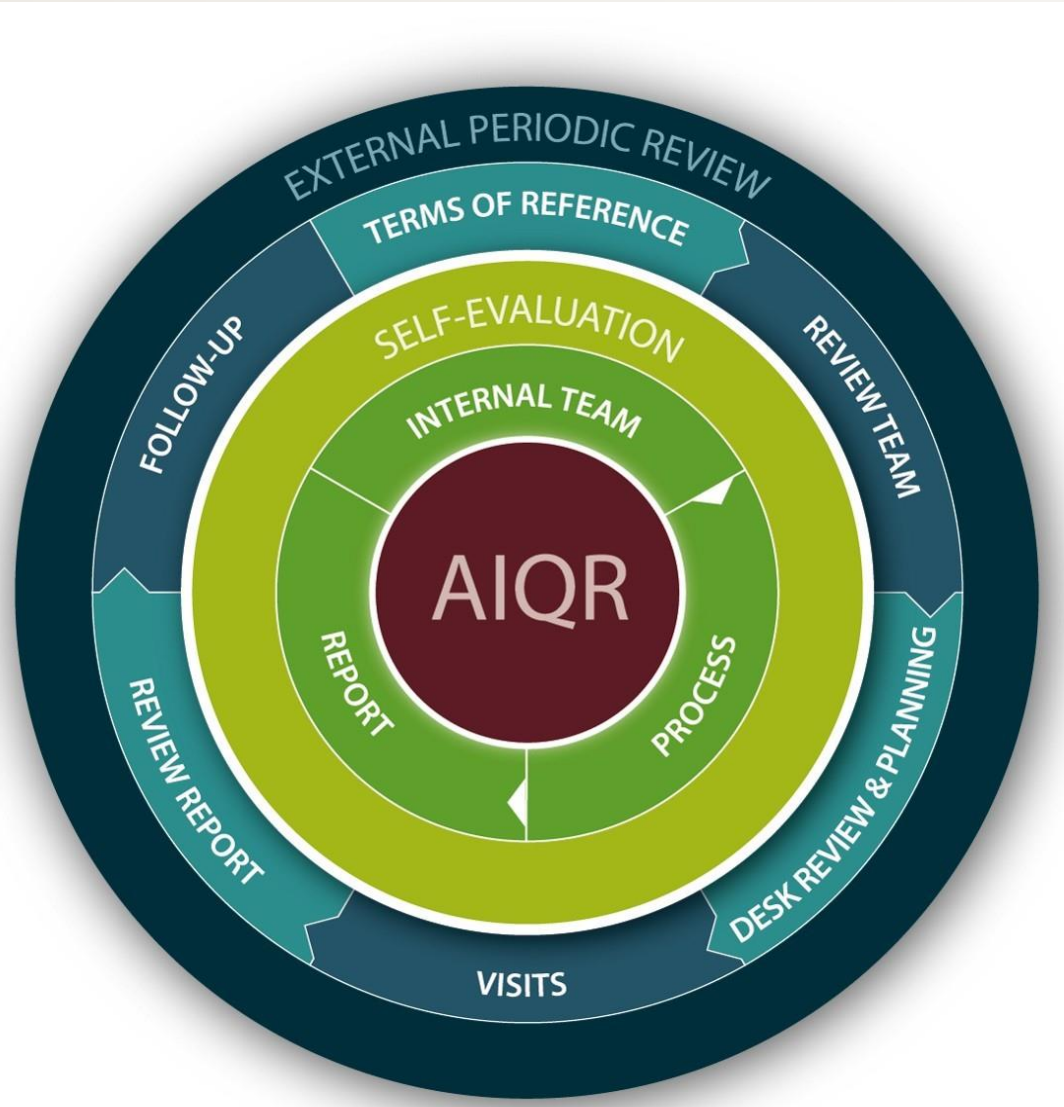
Balancing autonomy and accountability



Emerging Developments

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National Framework of Qualifications

Fit for purpose qualifications, appropriately levelled and offered by awarding bodies with transparent and effective arrangements for the development, design, review, delivery and certification of qualifications.

- Universities; RCSI; DIT; Technological Universities
- Institutes of Technology
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland
- Department of Education and Skills
- Listed Awarding Bodies

Qualification Registers as trusted sources of Information

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- "The most successful information providers will likely be those that are able to assist in curating information in a way that helps people navigate 'the information jungle."

Qualification Registers as trusted sources of information

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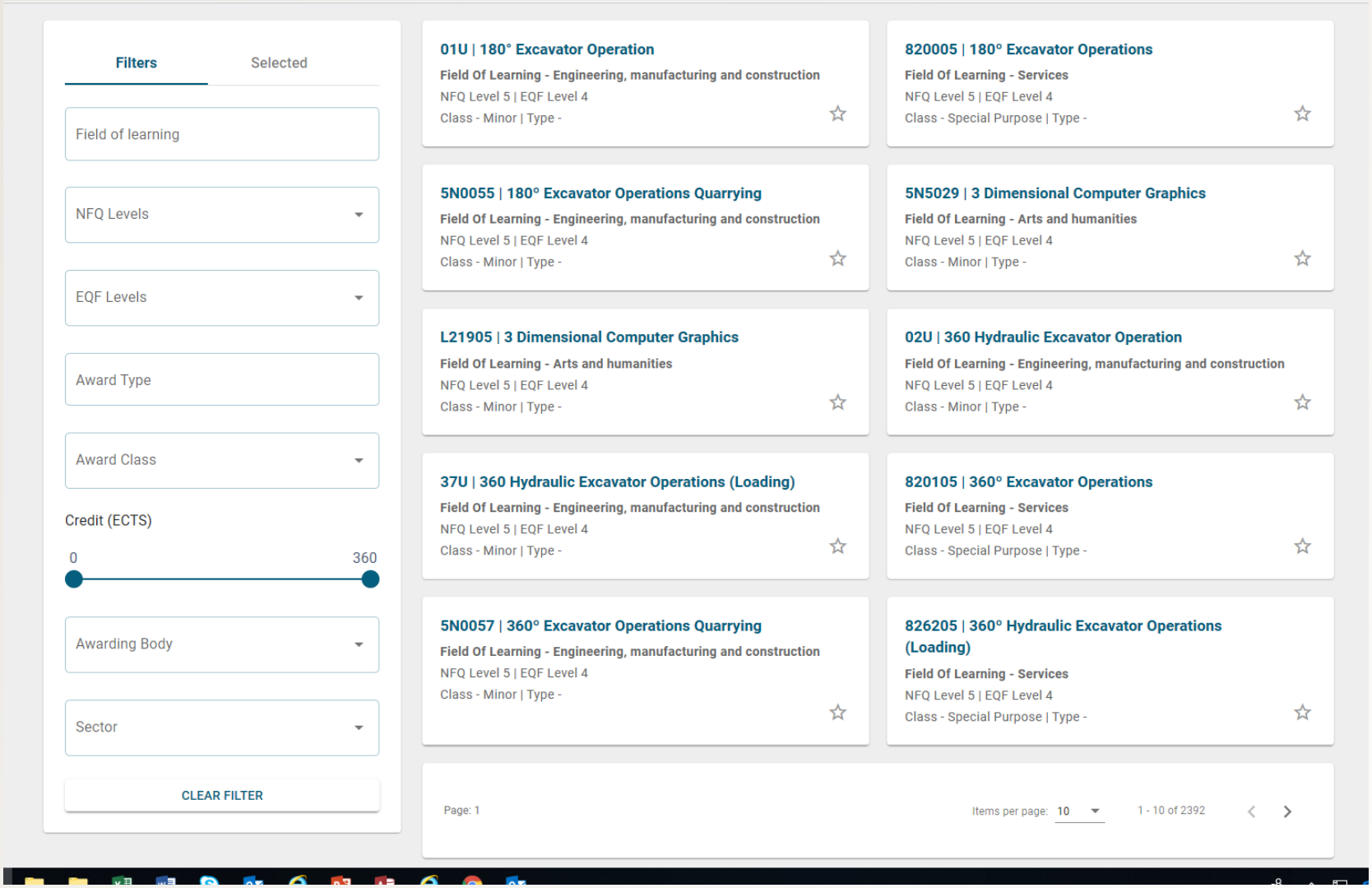

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Reflections on NQFs and skills matching

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- NQFs - useful condition for enhancing skills matching but only a small part of larger skills ecosystem
- NQFs should not over-promise on the employment agenda
- Impact depends on extent to which concepts such as skill and competence enjoy a shared meaning in world of work and world of education
- NQFs as a platform for dialogue should not be under estimated
- Need to understand the relationship between qualifications and work performance
- Trust and confidence in qualifications important for labour market actors (buyers and sellers)
- International orientation of NQFs can facilitate mobility of skills
- Policy learning rather than policy borrowing

Thank You

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joconnor@qqi.ie

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