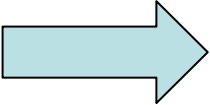


THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

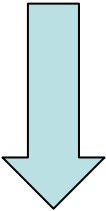
the Qualifications Framework and
Irish Universities

From
Bologna Declaration 1999



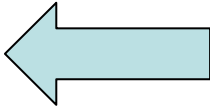
To
Prague Communiqué 2001

*Now involves 45
countries – not just EU*



To
Berlin Communiqué 2003

To Bergen 2005



Overview

- Key principles of Bologna
- Additional principles from each of the meetings – Prague, Berlin, Bergen
- Some principles expanded
- National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
- Qualifications Framework
- The Universities

Bologna 1999

European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010

Stated Intention to have:

- System of easily readable and comparable degrees
- Two main cycles (undergraduate/graduate)
- System of Credits (such as ECTS)

To promote

- International Transparency
- International Recognition
- International Mobility of Learners & Grads
- European co-operation in QA
- a European dimension in HE

Underlying Principles

- International mobility of students and staff
- Autonomous Universities
- Student participation in governance of HE
- Public responsibility for HE
- Social dimension of the Bologna Process

Prague 2001

- Reaffirmed objectives of Bologna
- Emphasised
 - Inclusion of Lifelong Learning strategies
 - Involvement of HE institutions and students as essential partners in the process
 - Promotion of attractiveness and competitiveness of EHEA to other parts of the world

Berlin 2003

- Intermediate priorities for next two years
 - Quality Assurance
 - The Two-Cycle degree system
 - Recognition of degrees and periods of studies
 - Berlin Communiqué
 - Specific goals set for each of the action lines
 - Doctoral Studies and synergy between the EHEA and the ERA (European research Area)
 - Each participating country to develop a national framework of qualifications

Berlin contd.

- By 2005 National QA Systems to include
 - Definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved
 - Evaluation of programmes or institutions, including internal assessment, external review, participation of students and publication of results
 - A system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures
 - International participation, co-operation and networking

Mobility

- Bologna
 - Mobility by overcoming obstacles
- Prague
 - Continued promotion of mobility for students, teachers, researchers, and admin staff

Autonomous Universities

- Bologna
 - Independence and autonomy ensure that HE and research systems continuously adapt to changing needs, society's demands and advances in scientific knowledge
- Berlin
 - Institutions need to be empowered to take decisions on their internal organisation and administration

Student Participation in Governance of HE

- Prague
 - Students should participate in and influence the organisation and content of education at universities and other HEIs
- Berlin
 - Students are full partners in HE governance. Institutions and student organisations should identify ways of increasing actual student involvement in HE governance

HE as a Public Responsibility

- Prague
 - HE should be considered a public good and is, and will remain, a public responsibility

Social Dimension

- Berlin
 - Need to increase competitiveness must be balanced with objective of improving social characteristics of the EHEA, aiming at strengthening social cohesion and reducing social and gender inequalities both at national and at European level

‘Dublin Descriptions

- 2002 – 2004
- *Berlin Communiqué*

*Ministers encourage the member States to elaborate a **framework** of comparable and compatible **qualifications** for their higher education systems, which should seek to describe qualifications in terms of **workload, level, learning outcomes, competences** and **profile**. They also undertake to elaborate an **overarching framework** of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area.*

*Within such frameworks, degrees should have different defined outcomes. First and second cycle degrees should have different orientations and various **profiles** in order to accommodate a diversity of individual, academic and labour market needs. First cycle degrees should give **access**, in the sense of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, to second cycle programmes. Second cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies.*

Dublin Descriptors

- System of easily readable and comparable degrees, based on 2 cycles (now 3)
 - Diploma Supplement
 - Qualifications Framework
- Identify the academic, and other requirements that, as the outcomes of study, characterise and distinguish between Bachelor and Master Degrees, and the doctoral and short cycle qualifications
- Common Denominator approach

London 2007

- Implementation of standards and guidelines for QA
- National Frameworks for Qualifications implemented
- Awarding and recognition of joint degrees, including at doctorate level
- Creating opportunities for flexible learning paths in HE, including procedures for recognition of prior learning

The European Context

- **EUA established 2001**
 - Represents European universities, supports institutional development and encourages universities to act together
 - 700 individual universities
- **Converging HE and Research agendas**
 - Key role of education and research in making Europe the worlds most competitive and dynamic knowledge economy by 2010 (Lisbon Process)

The Progress

- Legal structure in place
- General acceptance of need for reform
- Growing awareness of importance of quality enhancement
- Some of the 'reluctant' disciplines coming on board

The Concerns

- Change accepted but not always supported
- A lot done w.r.t 2/3 cycles but curricular restructuring (inc student-centred learning) still a long way to go
- Employability of 1st cycle graduates a major concern in Continental Europe
- Recognition of qualifications: systematic use of ECTS credits and DS still at top of agenda – mobility in question
- National rather than European debate

National Qualifications Framework

The Irish Response

Learning Outcomes

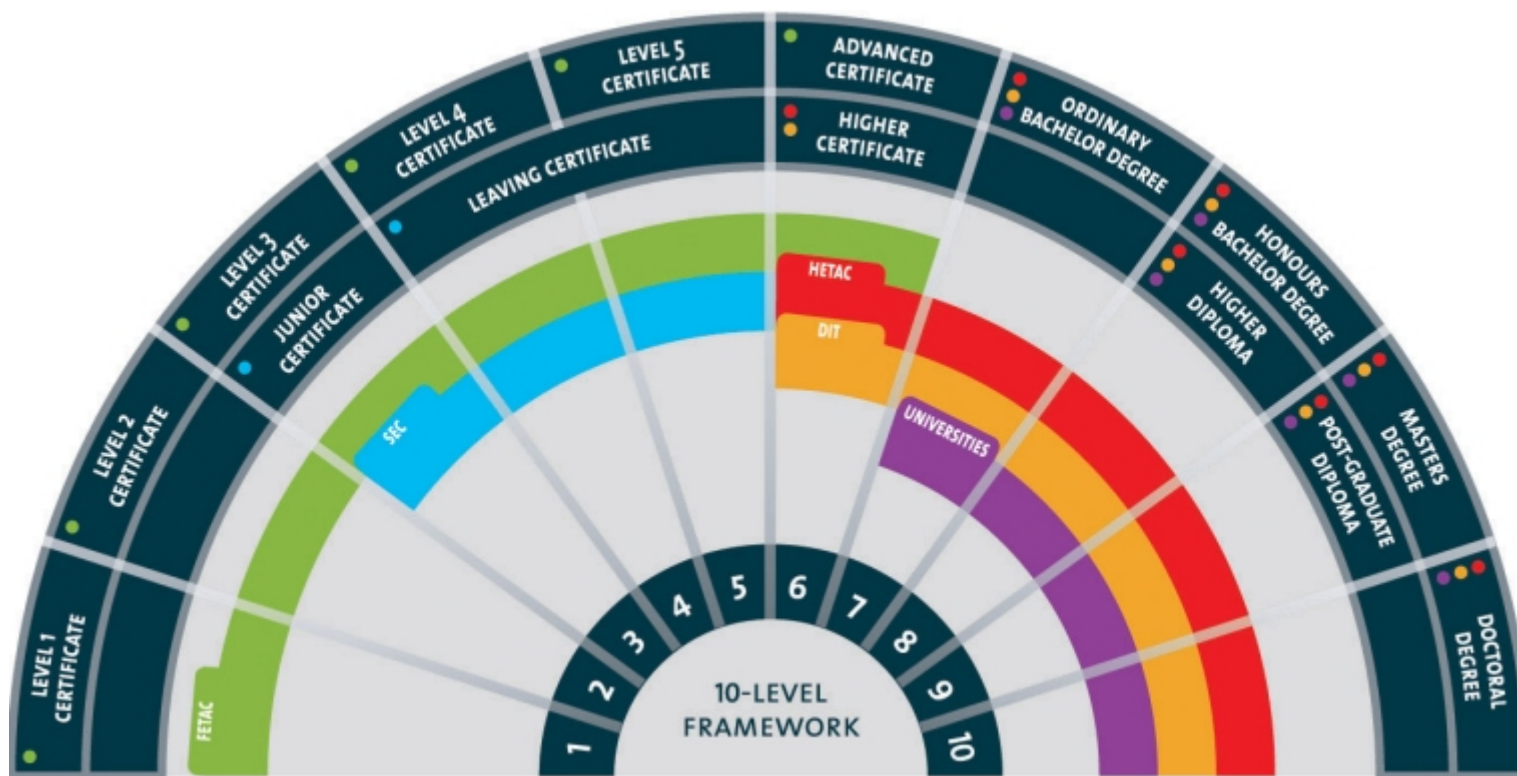
- The mechanism for implementing these goals
- The Framework
 - Defines and describes the outcomes
 - Knowledge, Skill and Competencies for the different levels of awards
 - Defines relationship between levels through learning outcomes
 - Positions certain key qualifications at the appropriate level on basis of their learning outcomes

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

- Legislative Dimension
- Widespread consultation, research and development to create the Qualifications Framework
 - Sub-Strands of Knowledge, Skill and Competence: generic Learning Outcomes
 - Knowledge – Breadth; Kind
 - Know-how and skill - Range; Selectivity
 - Competence - Context; Learning to Learn; Insight
- Had to be acceptable to and usable by stakeholders with diverse philosophies of learning

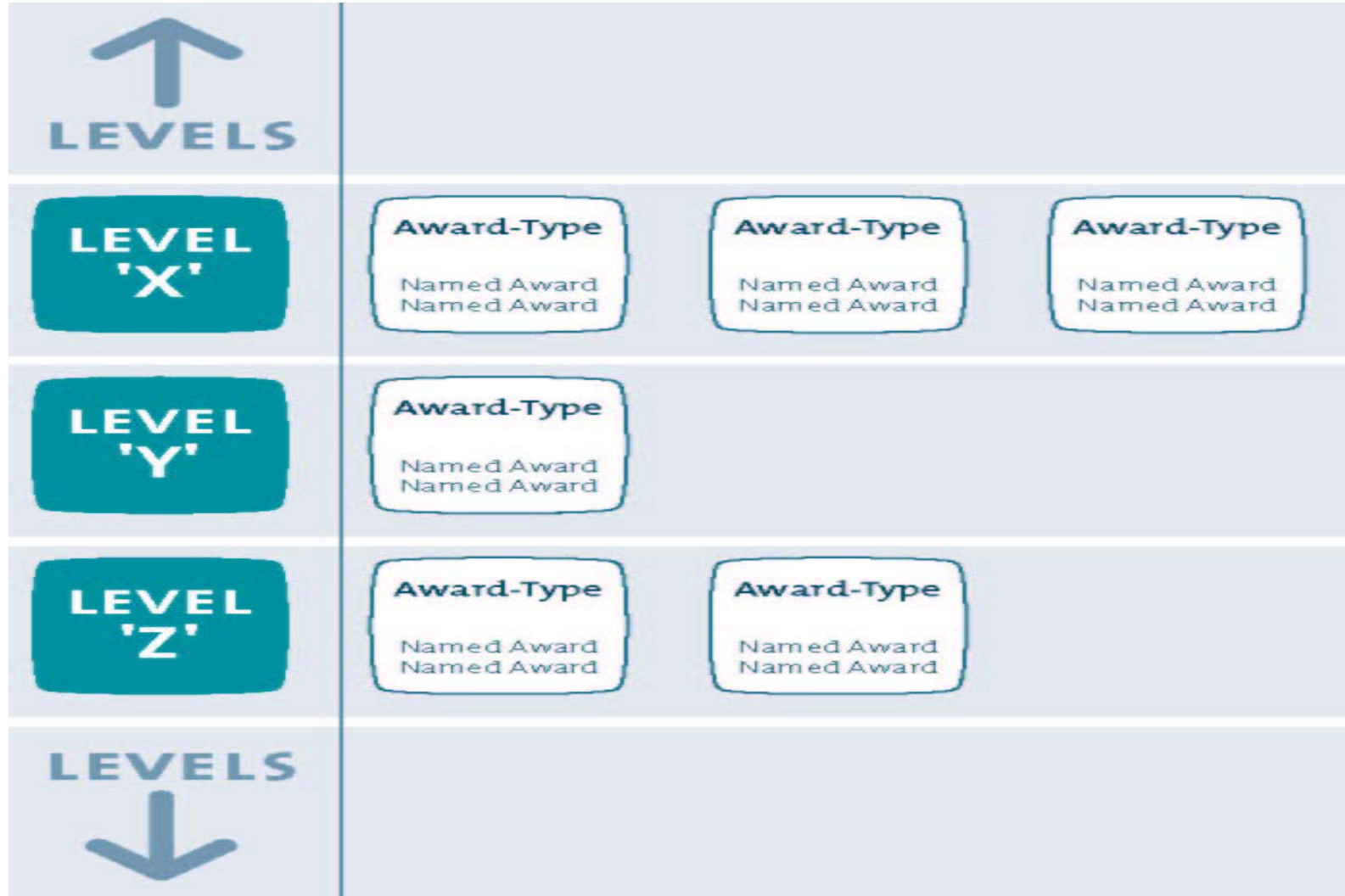
(Cf handout of Grid of Level Indicators)

The Framework



Taken from www.NQAI.ie

Levels and Awards



Use of Framework Outcomes by: HETAC

- Award-type descriptors adopted as interim standards
- New discipline-specific standards being developed (available for some disciplines)
 - Art & Design; Business; Engineering; Nursing; Science;

Use of Framework: DIT and Universities

- Now incorporated into DIT programme validation processes
- Universities increasingly engaging with Framework outcomes
 - Used in some module descriptors for major awards
 - Will be used to facilitate inclusion of minor/special purpose awards
 - Will assist in clarification of the positioning of the Level 8 and Level 9 major diploma awards

European Meta-Framework

- Primacy of the National Framework of Qualifications
- QA required in national arrangements
- Qualifications relate to National Frameworks and Frameworks talk to each other through meta-frameworks
- Countries self-certify the link of their national frameworks to European frameworks following established criteria and procedures
- Process for verifying the compatibility of the Irish Framework with Bologna Framework underway (Ireland and Scotland will be the first to do this)

Universities

- “The Universities and the National Framework of Qualifications” – IUA 2005
- Discussion paper “Towards the completion of Framework implementation in the universities” Jan 2006 NQAI

Implications for Universities

- Award-type descriptors are the yardstick used to reach agreement between Uni's and NQAI for accommodation of Uni Awards within the Framework
- Inclusion of Uni Awards – great benefit to students and prospective students
- Level of each award made clear in all prospectuses
- Significant progress on Doctoral, Masters, Honours Bachelor and ordinary Bachelor Degrees
- Minor, special purpose and supplemental awards being examined

Fitting Awards into the Framework

- Almost all primary degrees in Uni's are level 8
- Small number at level 7 (exit awards)
- Some local issues still exist
- Outstanding Award Types
 - Postgraduate Diplomas (NQAI)
 - Level 8 – Conversion Courses - Higher Diploma
 - Level 9 – Staging Post/Exit Point from Masters – PG Diploma
 - Under discussion in Uni's
 - Sub-degree awards
 - Currently being examined
 - Legacy/historical awards
 - No longer on offer
 - Task of placing these well under way

Other Issues

- Professional Awards
- Credit Accumulation
 - Set of “Principles for operational guidelines for implementation of a national approach to credit in Irish HE and training” adopted by NQAI in consultation with Awards Councils and Uni’s and other providers
 - Compatible with ECTS
- Access Transfer and Progression
 - Issues w.r.t transparent pathways from Level 7 to 8
 - Mature students – need consistent and transparent procedures

The Future

- Universities working to ensure all awards fit appropriately into Framework
- Templates being developed for non-major awards

References/Acknowledgements

- Dr. Norma Ryan, UCC
- Dr. Jim Murray, NQAI
- www.bologna.ie
- www.iua.ie
- www.NQAI.ie
- www.HEA.ie