



Apprenticeships & the NFQ:

Your Guide to Qualifications that work

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01 Why This Guide Matters

What is the NFQ?

The **National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)** is Ireland's official system for recognising and comparing all education and training qualifications. It includes everything from Junior Cert (Level 3) to Doctorates (Level 10). Each qualification is placed on a specific **level (1-10)** based on what a learner knows, understands and can do after completing it.



02 Why It's Important

Traditionally, apprentices were seen as “alternative” routes to careers. Today, they’re fully embedded with the NFQ, giving them **equal status to college and university qualifications**. Whether you’re just starting out or retraining, the NFQ ensures your learning counts, no matter how or where you achieve it



QUALIFICATION

An apprenticeship can lead to a **Level 5,6,7,8**.



HIGHER EDUCATION

You can progress to **further or higher** education after your apprenticeship



RECOGNISED

Recognised training across Europe, thanks to NFQ alignment with the **European Qualifications Framework - EQF**.

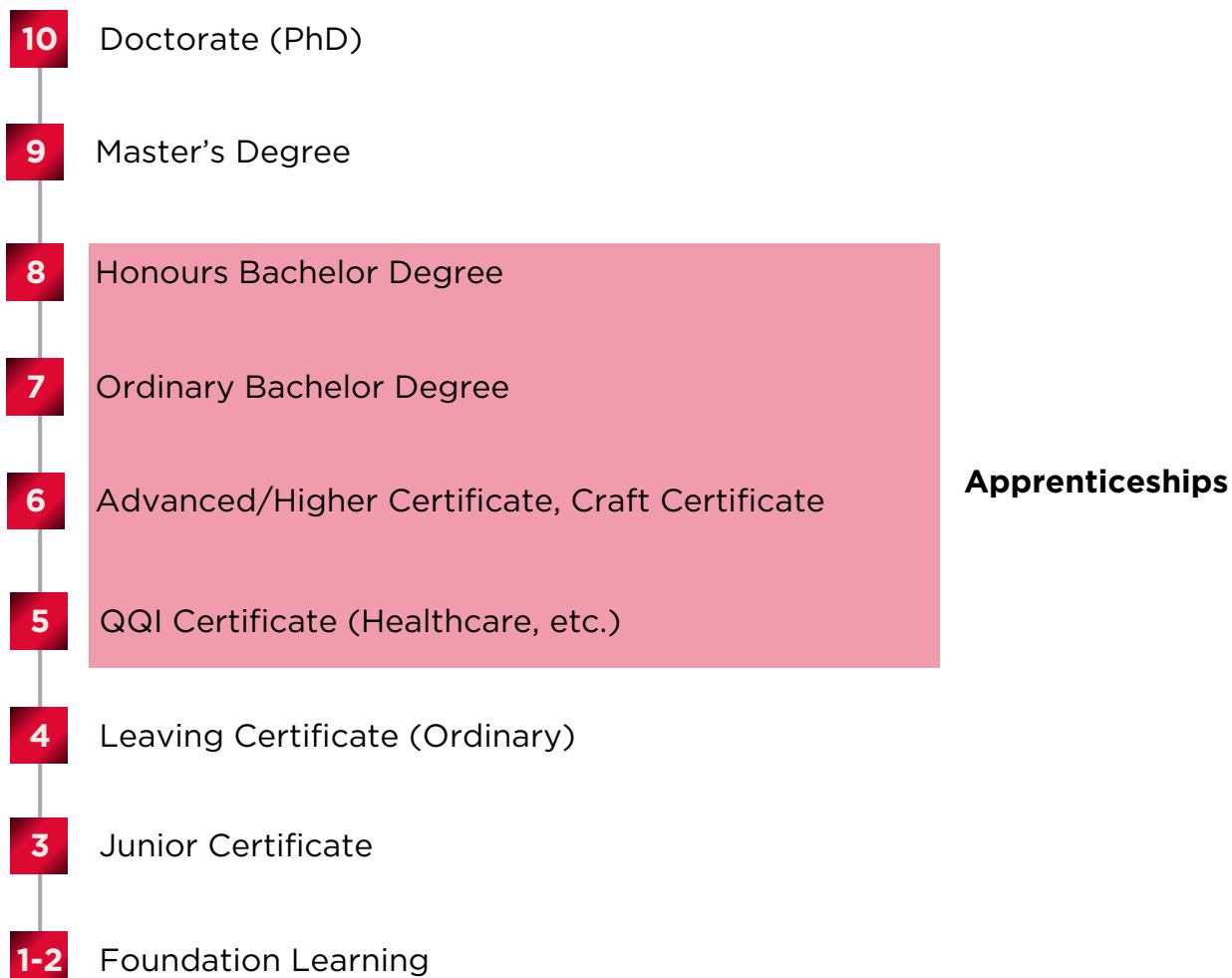
What is the NFQ?

The **NFQ** is Ireland's 10-level that classifies all qualifications, from school-leavers to PhDs, based on learning outcomes and progression potential. Whether you're in school, on an apprenticeship or at university, your qualification has a place on the scale.

IT CLARIFIES:

- 💡 Learners understand **where they are** and where they can go next
- 💡 Employers assess qualifications **fairly and clearly**
- 💡 Education providers across Europe **compare credentials** (via the EQF)

THE NFQ LADDER



Apprenticeships usually start at **Level 5 or 6**, but some go all the way to **Level 8!**

That means apprentices can gain the **same qualifications as college or university students**, while learning on the job and earning a wage.

APPRENTICESHIPS USUALLY START AT LEVEL 5 OR 6, BUT SOME GO ALL THE WAY TO LEVEL 8

Apprenticeships = Real Qualifications

Today's apprenticeships aren't limited to traditional trades, they cover healthcare, tech, finance, logistics and more. Best of all? They lead to **nationally recognised qualifications** between **NFQ Levels 5-8**.

Apprenticeship Examples by QQI Levels

Level 5

Healthcare Support



QQI Level 5 Certificate in Healthcare Support

2 Years

Leads to Healthcare Assistant with progression to Nursing (NFQ Level 8)

Delivered by ETBs, Private Nursing Homes

Consortium led

Level 6

Electrical Apprenticeship



National Craft Certificate (SOLAS)

4 Years

Leads Qualified Electrician, Site Supervisor, Contractor

Delivered by SOLAS-approved employers

Traditional Craft

Level 7

Insurance Practice



Ordinary Degree in Insurance Practice

3 Years blended
Learning

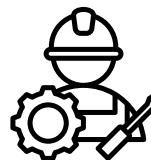
Leads Claims Specialist, Underwriter, Broker

Delivered by IT Sligo (now ATU), Insurance Institute

Professional Apprenticeship

Level 8

Engineering Technician



Bachelor of Engineering (Honours)

4 Years

Leads to Mechanical Technician, Process Engineer

Delivered by TU Dublin, OEM Industry Group

Advanced Apprenticeship

There are now over 70+ apprenticeships available in Ireland, with more being developed each year

Pathways, Comparisons & Next Steps

How Can I Progress Through the NFQ with an Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships aren't a dead end, they're a launch pad. You can move up, across or even return to education later in your career

Level 4
(FETAC / PLC Entry)

Level 5
(QQI Cert - Healthcare Support)

Level 6
(Craft Certificate - Electrical)

Level 7/8
(Degree or Apprenticeship)

How Do They Compare To Other Routes?

Apprenticeships offer **the same level of qualifications** as full-time college, with the added benefit of **earning while you learn** and gaining hands-on work experience

Route	NFQ Level(s)	Example Qualification
Leaving Certificate	4-5	Established Leaving Cert
PLC-Course	5-6	Childcare, Business etc.
Apprenticeship	5-8	Craft Cert (L6), Degree (L7/8)
College / University	6-8	Higher Certificate BA/BSc, Honours Degree

Still Have Questions? We've Got The Answers!

Here are 6 clear, helpful and commonly asked questions that address concerns from learners, parents and career changers:

1. CAN I GO TO COLLEGE AFTER AN APPRENTICESHIP?

- ✓ Yes! Most apprenticeships are mapped to the NFQ, so you can progress to further or higher education (especially from Level 5/6 to Level 7/8)

2. WILL EMPLOYERS RECOGNISE MY QUALIFICATION?

- ✓ Absolutely. Apprenticeships are approved by QQI, SOLAS and industry bodies, so they're nationally and internationally recognised

3. WHAT IF I WANT TO SWITCH CAREERS LATER?

- ✓ You can. Many apprenticeships build transferable skills and open up pathways to other industries through work experience or further study

4. HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

- ✓ Most apprenticeships are free and you'll earn while you learn. Some programmes may have minor material or registration fees

5. WHO CAN APPLY FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP?

- ✓ Anyone over 16 with the right entry requirements. Some require a Leaving Cert, others accept PLCs, QQI Level 4/5 or relevant experience

Ask us! At Crewit, we want to make the process as easy as possible. Send us your inquiries no matter how big or small.

We are happy to make it happen!

Thank You for Exploring Your Future With Us!

Whether you're ready to start your apprenticeship or just gathering info, this guide is your launchpad to real qualifications, real experience and real opportunities

Get Started

Browse open apprenticeships

Head over to www.apprenticeship.ie or simply ask us!

Scan and register with us!

Head over to www.apprenticeship.ie or simply ask us!

Talk to an advisor

Email Us:
apprenticeships@crewitresourcing.com
Call Us: 01 000 0000

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