



Qualifications Framework and Re-Accreditation – the Irish Experience

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In 2001, three bodies established:

- National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI),
- Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC),
- Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC).



Irish National Framework of Qualifications – why?

- **A coherent national policy approach to qualifications**
- **Lifelong learning society**
 - need for a more flexible system of qualifications
 - need for portability of qualifications
- **International comparison and alignment**
 - European policy trends and agreements – Lisbon, Copenhagen and Bologna, European Qualifications Framework (EQF).



In 2003, National Framework of Qualifications launched with 10 levels:

- Levels 6 – 8 Bologna First Cycle
- Level 9 Bologna Second Cycle
- Level 10 Bologna Third Cycle



Framework Principles

- Awards based on knowledge, skill and competence
- Duration neutral
- Learning outcomes



The Framework: blueprint for change

- **A new concept of an ‘award’:**
an award is a recognition of learning outcomes
- **New awards, new titles**
- **New terminology**
 - learning outcomes
 - levels and level indicators
 - award-types and award-type descriptors
 - named awards

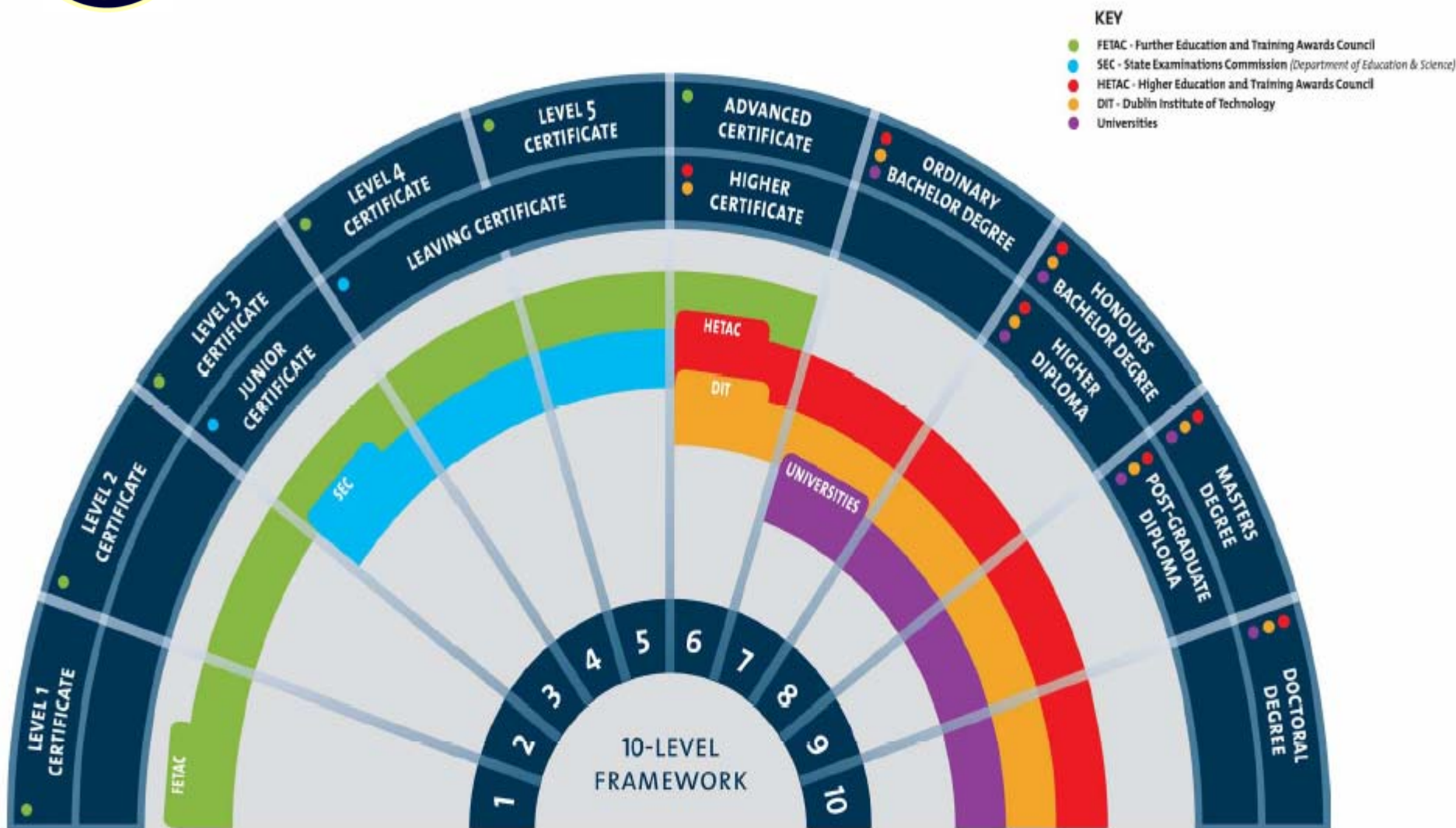


The Framework in outline

- A structure of 10 levels
- Each level based on a range of standards of knowledge, skill and competence
- Level indicators



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





Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC)

- Award
- Accredit
- Assure



- 1000+ programmes accredited by HETAC in 40+ Higher Education Institutions by January 2004
- Challenge to place these on National Framework of Qualifications
- Normal process would finish in 2016!



- Consultation
- Agreement
- Planning



- Each Programme Board in each Higher Education Institute reviewed its programme
- Examined expected learning outcomes
- Proposed knowledge, skill and competence expected
- Proposed appropriate level on Framework



Each Higher Education Institute through its Academic Council (Faculty Board) reviewed and approved this work.



- HETAC received submissions
- HETAC staff reviewed and consulted
- HETAC appointed three expert panels to conduct process review (1 week in April 2004)
- Panels reported to HETAC and recommended amendments



HETAC accredited amended programmes
and placed 997 on Framework in June 2004



Further Information

- All developments are featured on the website of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland:

www.nqai.ie

- New website for the Framework:

www.nfq.ie

- See also the Awards Councils' websites:

www.fetac.ie

www.hetac.ie