

# Measuring the impact of the NQFs - Reflections from Ireland

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[www.QQI.ie](http://www.QQI.ie)



# Towards a National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)



The single, nationally and internationally accepted entity, through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way and which defines the relationship between all education and training awards.

# Key Milestones in the Development of the NFQ

1999	The NFQ was proposed by the <a href="#">Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999</a>
2003	<a href="#">Policies and Criteria for the Establishment of the National Framework of Qualifications</a> are published. The official launch of the NFQ
	<a href="#">The Grid of Level Indicators</a> is published
	<a href="#">Determinations for the Outline National Framework of Qualifications</a> are published
2004	<a href="#">Descriptors for Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental Award Types</a> are published
2006	<a href="#">Verification of Compatibility of Irish National Framework of Qualifications with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area</a>
2009	The <a href="#">NFQ was referenced to the EQF</a> the first National Qualifications Framework to complete this exercise



# Irish Framework Implementation and Impact Study (2009)



- Assess implementation of the NFQ
- Assess policies on ATP
- Assess the initial impact of the Framework



# Irish Framework Implementation and Impact Study (2009)

## Methodology

- Background Paper
- Sector Inputs
- Public Consultation
- International Study Team



# Irish Framework Implementation and Impact Study (2009)

## Findings

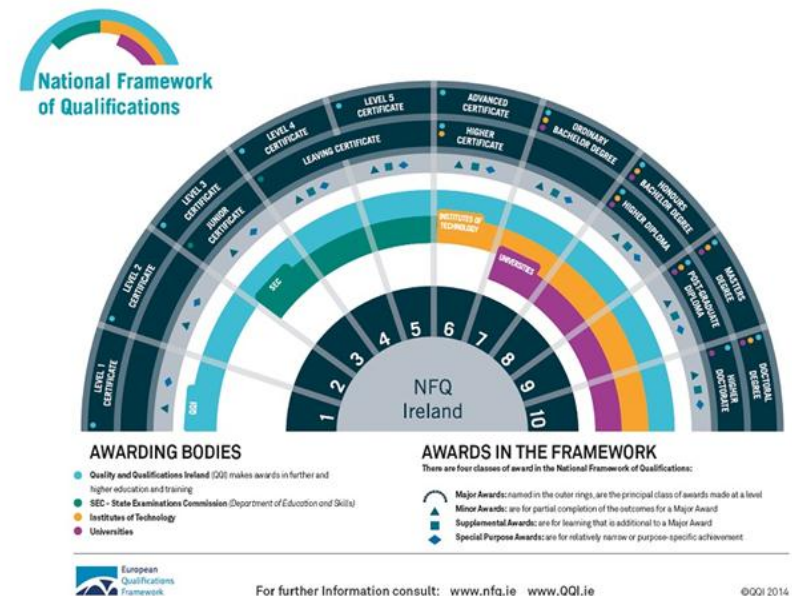
- Framework implementation well advanced
- Too early to conclude on impact of NFQ



# Establishment of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2012)

The 2012 Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act reaffirms the statutory basis of the NFQ and entrusts maintenance and development of NFQ to QQI.

QQI is responsible for promoting, maintaining, further developing, implementing and reviewing the [NFQ](#).



# Measuring NFQ Impact



## Methodological challenges

- NFQ as a social construct
- The multiple purposes of the framework
- Effect or Impact?
- NFQ as a social phenomenon





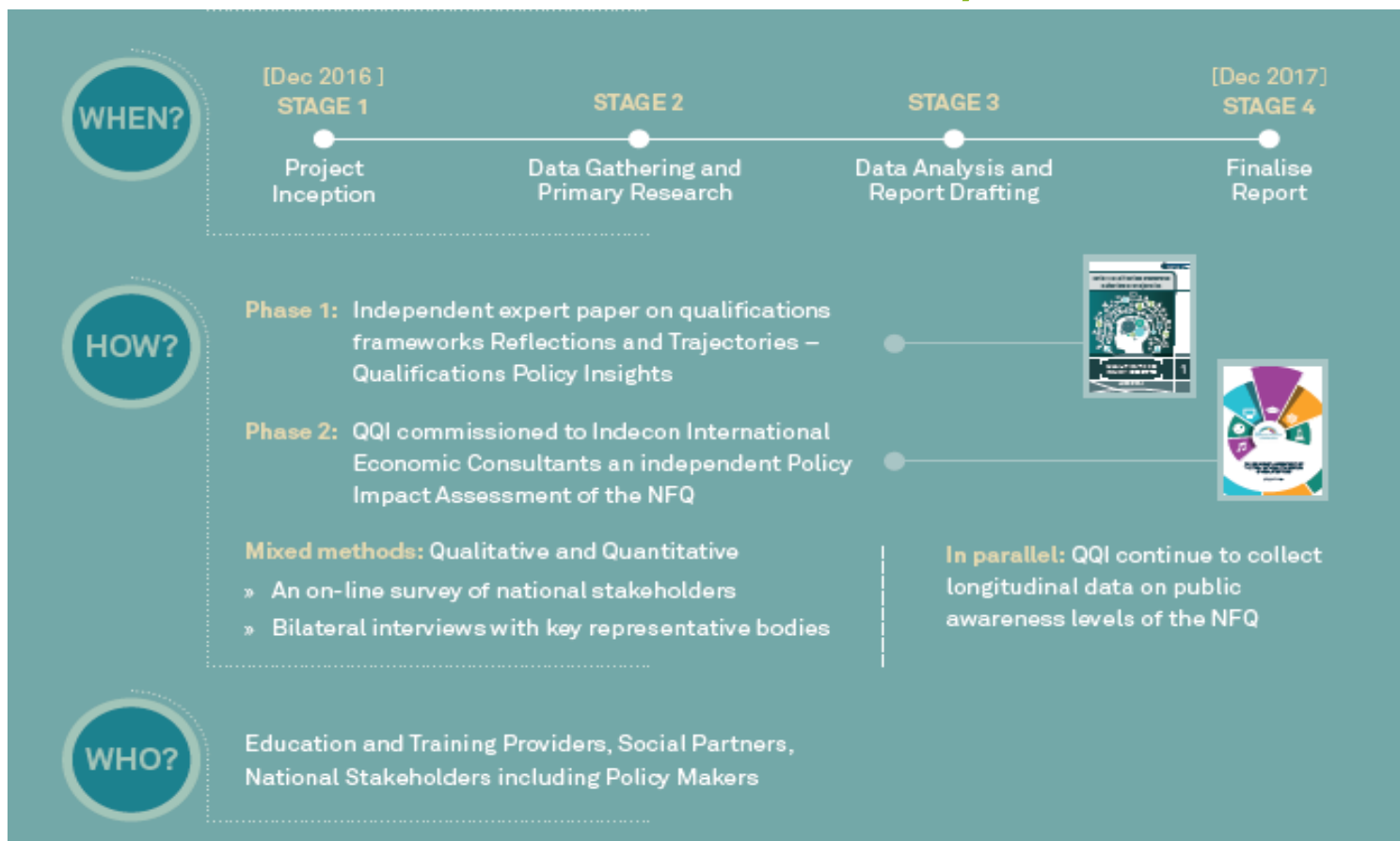
# NFQ Policy Impact Assessment 2016-2017



- Examine the actual effects and impact of the NFQ
- Engage with a range of national stakeholders including policy makers
- Inform future policy direction for the NFQ



# NFQ Policy Impact Assessment 2016-2017

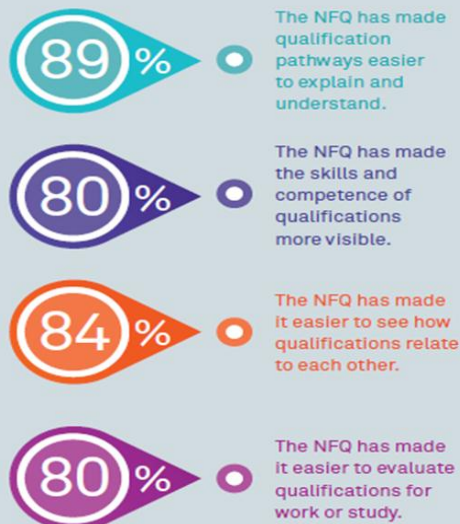


# NFQ Policy Impact Assessment 2016-2017

## FINDINGS: THE NFQ IMPACT ON...

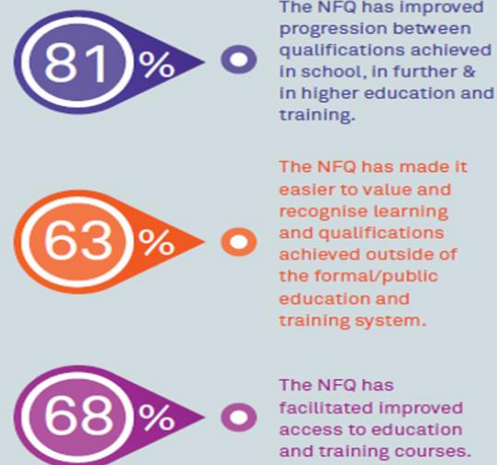
### Transparency of Qualifications

[showing percentages of survey participants who strongly agreed/agreed with these statements]



### Lifelong Learning, Progression and Mobility of Qualifications

[showing percentages of survey participants who strongly agreed/agreed with these statements]



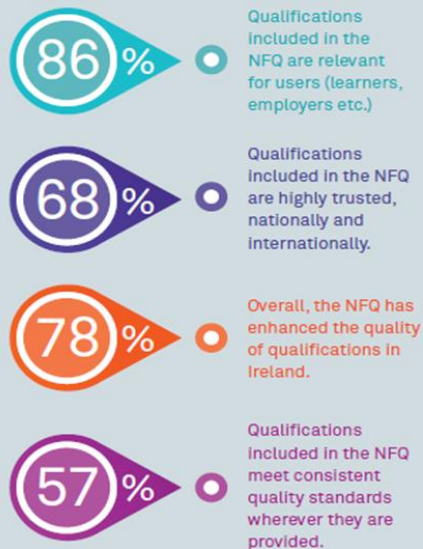
67% respondents strongly agree/agree that the NFQ has contributed to improving Ireland's national performance in the area of Lifelong Learning.

# NFQ Policy Impact Assessment 2016-2017

## FINDINGS: THE NFQ IMPACT ON...

### Quality of Qualifications

[showing percentages of survey participants who strongly agreed/agreed with these statements]



### Employment/ Skills Matching

[showing percentages of survey participants who strongly agreed/agreed with these statements]



Reported awareness levels of the NFQ are their highest level since commencing a longitudinal survey in 2014. Today, one in three claims to be aware of the NFQ.

# NFQ Policy Impact Assessment 2016-2017

## FINDINGS: THE NFQ IMPACT ON...

### Teaching, Learning and Assessment Practice

[showing percentages of survey participants who  
strongly agreed/agreed with these statements]

74%

The learning outcomes approach of the NFQ has improved the practice of course and curricula design.

64%

The learning outcomes approach of the NFQ has improved teaching and learning practice.

69%

The learning outcomes approach of the NFQ has improved assessment practice.

63%

The learning outcomes approach of the NFQ has improved how standards of courses and curricula are monitored and maintained.

70%

The NFQ has made a positive contribution to the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment.

### Recognition of Foreign Qualifications in Ireland and Irish Qualifications Abroad

[showing percentages of survey participants who  
strongly agreed/agreed with these statements]

61%



The NFQ has made it easier for qualifications achieved in other countries to be understood, compared and recognised in Ireland.

69%

The NFQ has made it easier for Irish qualifications to be understood, compared and valued in other countries.

# NFQ Policy Impact Assessment 2016-2017

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS...

- #1 •  Promote greater awareness, understanding and effective use of the NFQ
- #2 •  Embed NFQ in quality assurance policy and practice
- #3 •  Maintain and strengthen the international dimension of NFQ
- #4 •  Position the NFQ as a mechanism to support lifelong learning and skills agendas
- #5 •  Ensure that the development of the NFQ is informed by the best available evidence and supported by strong stakeholder engagement

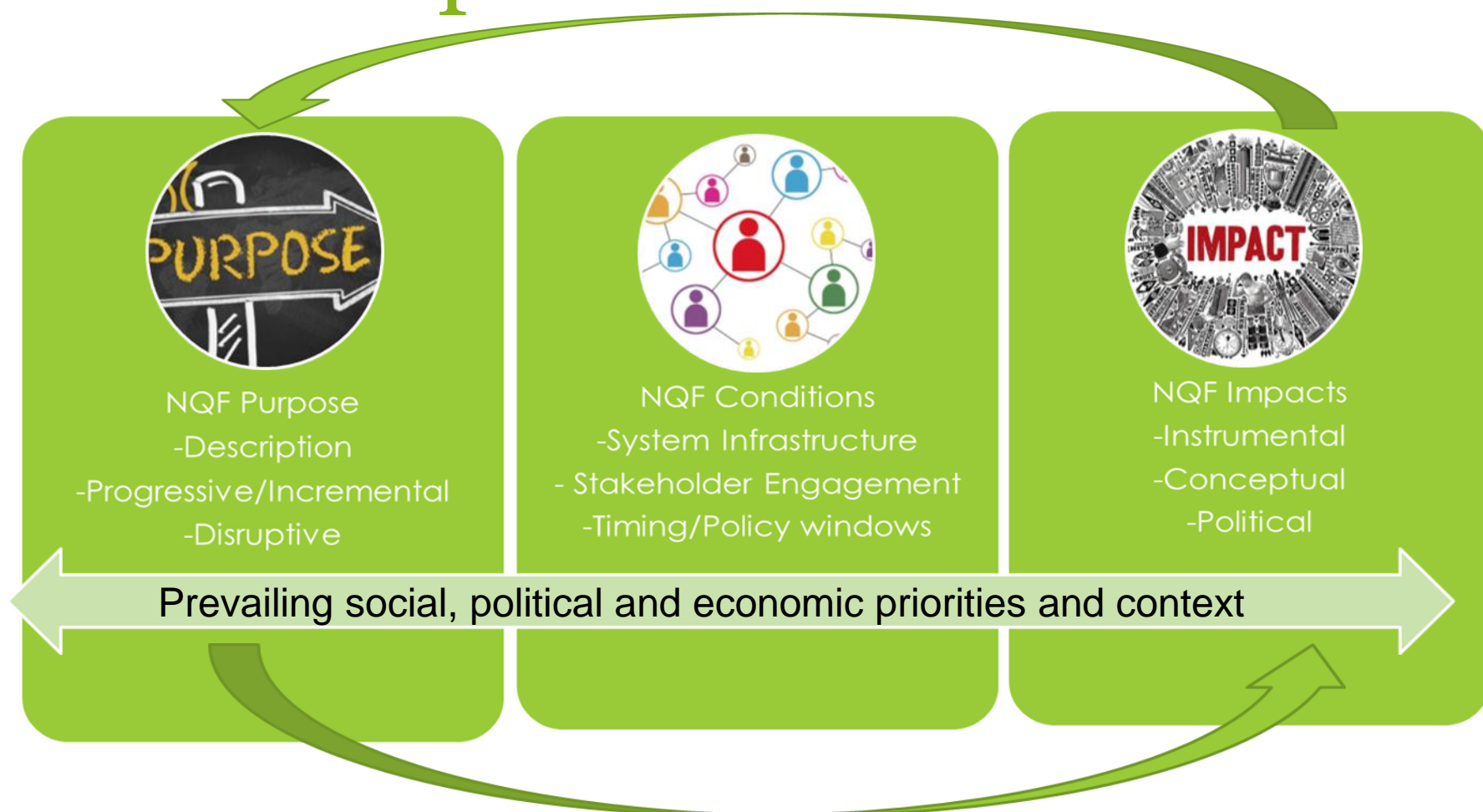
# Measuring the impact of the NQFs - Reflections from Ireland

- NQFs as social constructs with multiple meanings – require interpretative analysis and insights not just quantitative accounts
- NQF effects are typically diffuse and non-linear
- Purpose of NQFs determines their kinds of impact – pragmatic research approaches are needed to reveal NQF contribution
- Importance of peer dissemination and engagement
- Not enough to ask do NQFs work?...need to understand for who? why? and under what conditions they work?





# Towards a model of NQF Impact





# Thank you for your attention

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