

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION 'TOWARDS A EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR LIFELONG LEARNING'

The University of Ulster welcomes the development of a European Qualifications Framework as a means to improve understanding of national systems and to facilitate the transfer and recognition of qualifications through the use of common reference points.

The University is in agreement with an approach whereby the EQF provides a generic meta-structure to which national frameworks and systems are linked. Detailed arrangements should remain a national responsibility.

The University of Ulster, in common with other autonomous UK universities, has been using a learning outcomes and generic level descriptor model to describe its qualifications for some considerable time. This is compatible with our national frameworks.

It will be preferable for higher education institutions and other bodies to work in the context of national descriptors in this matter, with the reassurance that the national system is compatible with any European schema. Duplication and confusion may arise if broadly the same thing is set out in different words and institutions are expected to set their awards against a number of frameworks. Consequently we believe that the EQF should not be described in much detail.

It will also be essential that the relationship between the EQF and the recent Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area is made clear.

Thank you for affording the University of Ulster the opportunity to comment.

Professor Denise McAlister
Pro-Vice Chancellor (Teaching & Learning)

28 November 2005

AGF/lh