

The “Professional Diploma in Education”: new title for university initial post-primary teaching qualification, for programmes starting in the academic year 2011/2012.

Following detailed consultation between the Irish universities and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland in the context of the ongoing process of implementing the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), the universities have agreed that the initial post-primary teaching qualification, hitherto known as the Higher Diploma in Education and latterly as the Graduate or Postgraduate Diploma in Education, is to be formally included in the NFQ at Level 8 with immediate effect.

Since the launch of the NFQ in 2003, and pending its full implementation, a varied nomenclature has been used by the universities to designate the initial post-primary teaching qualification. In general, prior to 2006, the title of the qualification preferred by the universities was the Higher Diploma in Education. Since 2006, this has been gradually replaced by the title Postgraduate or Graduate Diploma in Education. A full list of the titles used by the universities for the qualification in the period 2005-11 is set out below.

As a result of the decision to include the initial post-primary teaching qualification at NFQ Level 8, the title Postgraduate/Graduate Diploma in Education, which is associated with NFQ Level 9, will be replaced with the new title Professional Diploma in Education to avoid confusion with the Level 9 award type. This new award title will be used by all universities for programmes starting in the academic year 2011/2012. All qualification titles used prior to 2011 (legacy titles), as set out in the table below, and in the years prior to 2005, are also included in the NFQ at Level 8.

The Professional Diploma in Education remains, like its predecessors the Higher Diploma in Education and the Postgraduate/Graduate Diploma in Education, the initial post-primary teaching qualification recognised by the Teaching Council for the purposes of entry on the Register as a post-primary teacher. It is a Level 8 qualification associated with a graduate entry programme, and as such is consistent with the Higher Diploma award type. The adoption of the new title by the universities will not, therefore, affect student entitlements under the existing Student Maintenance Grant Schemes. This has been confirmed in the 2011 Student Grant Scheme, see Article 17 (2) (a).¹

¹ <http://www.studentfinance.ie/downloads/Student%20Grant%20Scheme%202011.pdf>

List of university award titles used over the period 2005-2011

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
DCU	No qualification existed prior to 2006.	Graduate Diploma in Education					
NUIG	Higher Diploma in Education	Postgraduate Diploma in Education					
NUIM	Higher Diploma in Education		Postgraduate Diploma in Education				
TCD	Higher Diploma in Education			Postgraduate Diploma in Education			
UCC	Higher Diploma in Education	Postgraduate Diploma in Education					
UCD	Higher Diploma in Education		Graduate Diploma in Education				
UL	Graduate Diploma in Education						