



Educational System of Ireland

ECE® Education System Chart and Key

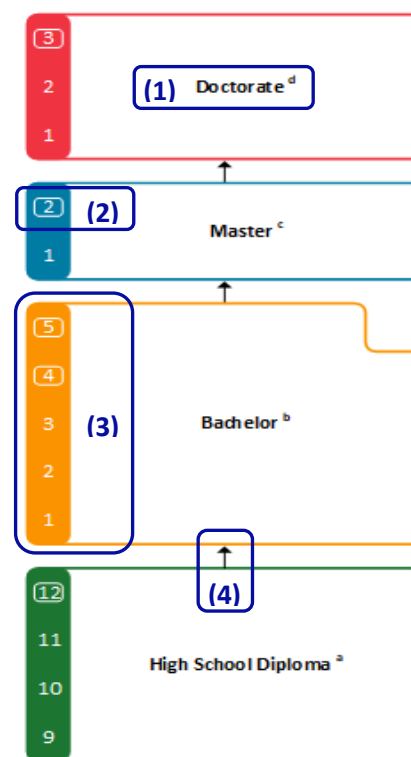


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Guide to Education System Charts

ECE® Education System Charts represent the typical progression through the country's educational system, from primary to higher education. Charts include the credential name, program duration, credential type or level, and typical progression through the system.

- (1) **Credential name** is included in the native language or English, with superscript letters to match the credential to the Key (included with ECE® Connection Advantage).
- (2) **Program duration** is reflected by a white box around the year(s) the credential is typically awarded.
- (3) **Credential type** or level is indicated by color. Colors generally refer to:
 - Green = Primary & Secondary
 - Orange = Undergraduate / 1st Cycle
 - Light Blue = Graduate / 2nd Cycle
 - Red = Doctoral / 3rd Cycle
 - Dark Blue = Vocational
 - Grey = Professional, alternative or optional paths
- (4) **Typical progression through the system** is represented by arrows. Not all pathways, credentials, or progressions are included. Major system changes are included if they were recently adopted.



Guide to Education System Keys

ECE® Education System Keys are available to ECE® Connection Advantage subscribers. For information on how to become an ECE® Connection Advantage user, go to TheConnection.ece.org/Advantage. Keys include detailed credential information and supplement the Charts. They may include the following:

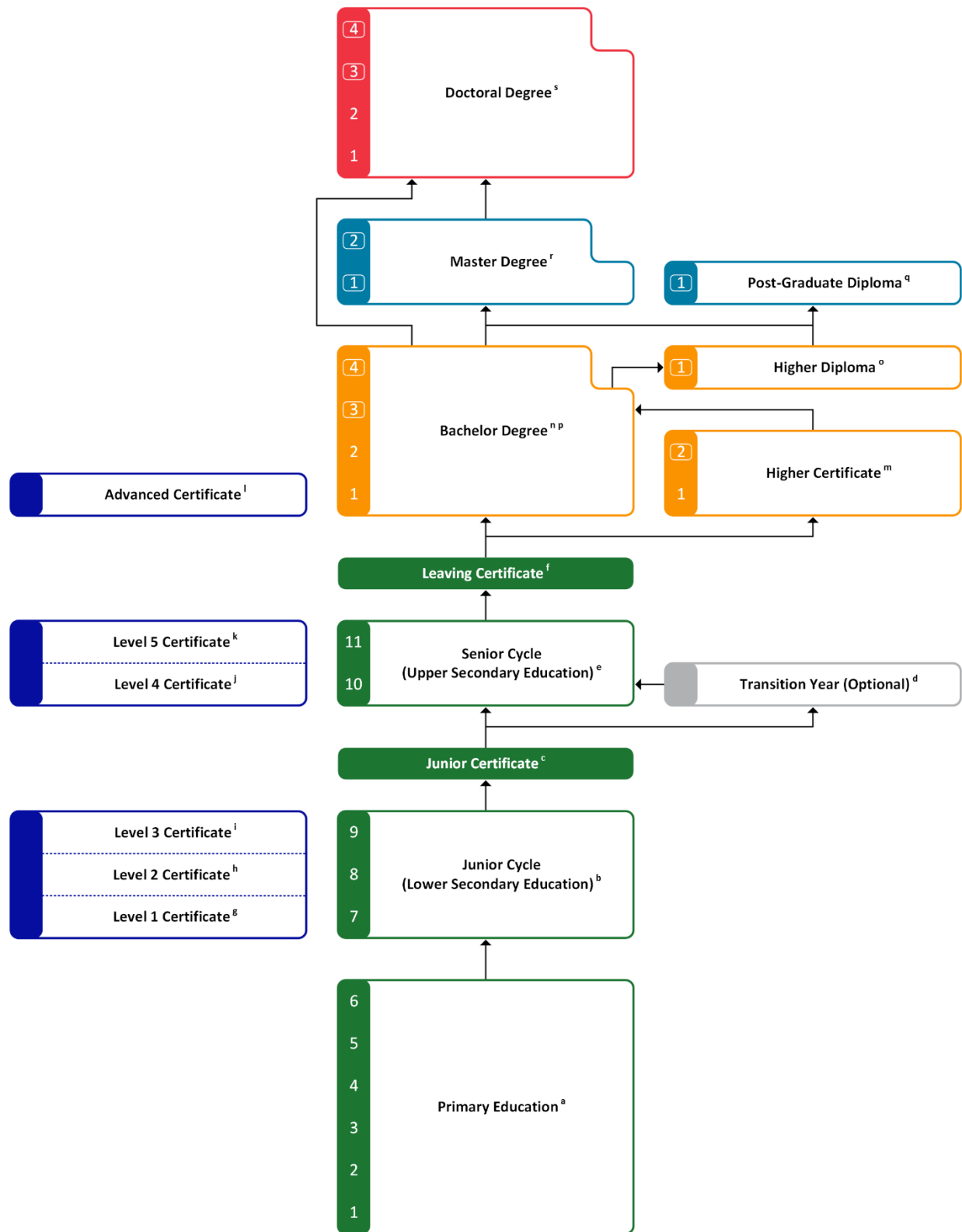
- **Credential type** or level indicates the level of education within the educational system.
- **Credential name** is included in the native language with English translation (if applicable). Pertains to the benchmark credential awarded. If there are alternate names, the most common is listed on the chart, with possible variations listed on the key.
- **Typical age of the student** is included for primary and secondary education only. Also defines end of compulsory education (if applicable).
- **Duration** of the program is cited, and whether education is part-time or full-time.
- **Admission requirement** indicates normal requirements needed to access the program.
- **Awarding/Regulating body** is listed for credentials, as well as teaching institution (if applicable).
- **Institutional providers** are highlighted with the comment: *Offered at*
- **Progression through the system** is referenced by the comment: *Provides access to*

g. *Licenciado* (Licentiate)

- Credential names include *Licenciado*, *Licenciatura*, and *Licenciatura Plena*
- Admission based on completion of *Ensino Médio* (b) and *ENEM/Vestibular* (c, d)
- 3-5 years
- Focus on teacher training
- Regulated by: MEC
- Awarded by: higher education institutions
- Provides access to: advanced standing in *Bacharel* (h) programs in same field; *Especialista* (i) programs; *Mestre* (j) programs; some *Doutor* (k) programs; teaching profession

Additional information provided, if available:

- **Level** within a National Qualification Framework is mentioned.
- **Credits, or their equivalent**, are included if part of a standardized system.



Education System Key of Ireland

Primary & Secondary Education

a. Primary Education

- 6 years
- Compulsory from age 6, typically ages 6-12
- Provides access to: Junior Cycle (b)

b. Junior Cycle (lower secondary)

- Admission based on completion of primary education (a)
- 3 years
- Compulsory, typically ages 12-15
- Leads to: Junior Certificate examination (c)

c. Junior Certificate

- National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Level 3
- Examination with maximum of 10 subjects, including Irish, English, and Mathematics
- Administered and awarded by State Examinations Commission (SEC)
- From 2017 on, Junior Certificate results from SEC are reported on Junior Certificate Profile of Achievement issued by teaching institution
- Provides access to: Senior Cycle (e); Level 4 Certificate programs (j)

d. Transition Year

- Admission based on Junior Certificate (c)
- Not on NFQ
- 1 year
- Not compulsory, typically ages 15-16
- Optional program offered by some schools between Junior Cycle (c) and Leaving Certificate program (e); not part of Leaving Certificate program (e)
- May or may not include coursework, no formal examinations
- Provides access to: Senior Cycle (e)

e. Senior Cycle (upper secondary)

- Admission based on Junior Certificate (c)
- 2 years (3 years if optional Transition Year [d] taken)
- Not compulsory, typically ages 15-18
- Leads to: Leaving Certificate examination (f)

f. Leaving Certificate

- NFQ Levels 4-5
- Examination with minimum of 5 subjects, including Irish
- Administered and awarded by SEC
- Provides access to: Bachelor degree programs (Ordinary or Honours) (n, p); Certificate or Diploma programs at Level 5 or above (k-m)

Technical & Vocational Education & Training

g. Level 1 Certificate

- NFQ Level 1
- Consists of individual components that can be accumulated toward certificate
- Often includes basic literacy & numeracy
- Awarded by: Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)*
- Provides access to: Level 2 Certificate programs (h)

h. Level 2 Certificate

- NFQ Level 2
- Consists of individual components that can be accumulated toward certificate
- Often includes basic literacy & numeracy
- Awarded by: QQI*
- Provides access to: Level 3 Certificate programs (l)

i. Level 3 Certificate

- NFQ Level 3
- Awarded by: QQI*
- Provides access to: Level 4 Certificate programs (j)

j. Level 4 Certificate

- NFQ Level 4
- Awarded by: QQI*
- Provides access to: employment; Level 5 Certificate programs (k)

k. Level 5 Certificate

- NFQ Level 5
- Awarded by: QQI*
- Provides access to: employment; some certificate, diploma, or degree programs at Level 6 and above (l-n)

l. Advanced Certificate

- NFQ Level 6
- Awarded by: QQI*
- Provides access to: employment; some certificate, diploma, or degree programs at Level 6 and above (m-n)

Higher/Professional Education**m. Higher Certificate**

- Admission based on Leaving Certificate (f) or equivalent
- NFQ Level 6
- 2 years (120 ECTS credits)
- Awarded by: QQI*; institutes of technology; universities
- Provides access to: advanced standing in Bachelor degree programs (n, p)

n. Bachelor Degree (Ordinary)

- Admission based on Leaving Certificate (f) or equivalent
- NFQ Level 7
- 3 years (180 ECTS credits)
- Awarded by: QQI*; institutes of technology; universities
- Provides access to: Higher Diploma programs (o); Bachelor degree (Honours) programs (p); some Post-Graduate Diploma programs (q); some Masters degree programs (r)

o. Higher Diploma

- Admission based on Bachelor degree (Ordinary or Honours) (n, p)
- NFQ Level 8
- 1 year (60 ECTS credits)
- Usually different field of study than previous degree
- Awarded by: QQI*; institutes of technology; universities
- Provides access to: some Post-Graduate Diploma programs (q); some Masters degree programs (r)

p. Bachelor Degree (Honours)

- Admission based on Leaving Certificate (f) or equivalent
- NFQ Level 8
- 3-4 years (180-240 ECTS credits); professional fields may be longer
- May also be 1-year program for holders of Ordinary Bachelor (n)
- Awarded by: QQI*; institutes of technology; universities
- Provides access to: Post-Graduate Diploma programs (q); Masters degree programs (r); some Doctoral degree programs (s)

q. Post-Graduate Diploma

- Admission usually based on Honours Bachelor (p), but some admit based on Ordinary Bachelor (n) or equivalent
- NFQ Level 9
- 1 year (60 ECTS credits)
- Awarded by: QQI*; institutes of technology; universities
- Provides access to: Masters degree programs (r); some Doctoral degree programs (s)

r. Masters Degree

- Admission usually based on Honours Bachelor (p), but some admit based on Ordinary Bachelor (n) or equivalent
- NFQ Level 9
- Taught or research
- 1-2 years (60-120 ECTS)
- Awarded by: QQI*; institutes of technology; universities
- Provides access to: Doctoral degree programs (s)

s. Doctoral Degree

- Admission based on Honours Bachelor (p) or Masters degree (r)
- If admitted based on Honours Bachelor (p), may earn Masters degree (r) en route
- NFQ Level 10
- 3-4 years
- Awarded by: QQI*; institutes of technology; universities

* Prior to 2012, credentials currently awarded by *Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)* were awarded by the *Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC)* or the *Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC)*.

Resources

- ✓ Department of Education: <https://www.education.ie/en/>
- ✓ Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI): <https://www.qqi.ie/>
- ✓ State Examinations Commission (SEC): <https://www.examinations.ie/>

ECE® Education System Charts and Keys were developed by the Research & Knowledge Management Evaluator team (Jade Jiang Rieger, Karen Krug, Majka Drewitz, Melissa Ganiere, and Rasmus Spanner). The cover image was obtained from Wikimedia Commons (CC0 1.0).