

Evaluation Criteria

The Information Management processes demonstrate how information is compiled. However, it is important to have a coherent set of criteria in order to interpret or analyse the information gathered in a meaningful manner, leading to a justified recommendation on a given award.

Evaluation Criteria need to reflect the concerns of the national system. These concerns centre on whether internationally trained applicants are:

- sufficiently well-trained to perform a certain occupational or professional role (*Taking into account European Directives and other relevant transnational legislation or arrangements*) or;
- adequately qualified to enter the further or higher education system in the country in question.

UK NARIC Evaluation Criteria

The current UK NARIC Evaluation Criteria are based on a NARIC Band Framework, which is designed to ensure accuracy and consistency of comparability statements accorded to international qualifications. They are also designed with the capacity to accommodate and reflect value comparisons of a wide range of international awards and transferable skills.

The current NARIC Band Framework seeks to adequately represent all the different types of international qualification and provide meaningful linkages to the most similar UK awards. The term Band is used to reflect the broad grouping of international qualifications that may be categorised together. This Framework is intended to not only cope with formal qualifications but also lifelong learning and transnational education experiences as required in the modern climate.

The Comparison Statement List is based on our experience of expressing the value of international qualifications, the outcomes of which are achieved under different education models and are designed to reflect national objectives. The comparisons have developed from in-country and UK institution feedback and have since gradually formalised towards a hierarchical structure of evaluation statements, encompassing academic and vocationally oriented qualifications. In this context, NARIC have sought to evolve the list of statements in order to eradicate inexact or excessively broadly statements. This, therefore, exemplifies a bottom-up approach to the issue of evaluation statements.

The bottom-up approach favoured by NARIC does at least provide a set of comparable qualification outcomes, to which to compare each international award received.

Traditionally, the following classifications were originally conceived for this purpose:

NARIC Band 0:

- 01) Is considered to be below GCSE / Standard Grade standard

- 02) Is considered to be below VGCSE standard
- 03) Is considered to be below N/SVQ level 1 standard

NARIC Band 1:

- 11) Is considered comparable to GCSE (grades D-G) / General Standard Grade standard
- 12) Is considered comparable to VGCSE (grades D-G) / SQA Intermediate 1 standard
- 13) Is considered comparable to N/SVQ level 1 / City & Guilds level 1 standard

NARIC Band 2:

- 21) Is considered comparable to GCSE (grades A*-C) / Credit Standard Grade standard
- 22) Is considered comparable to VGCSE (grades A*-C) / BTEC First Diploma / SQA Intermediate 2 standard
- 23) Is considered comparable to N/SVQ level 2 / City & Guilds level 2 standard
- 24) Is considered comparable to Foundation Modern Apprenticeship / National Traineeship standard

NARIC Band 3:

- 31) Is considered comparable to a standard between GCSE and GCE AS level
- 32) Is considered comparable to a standard between BTEC First Diploma and BTEC National Diploma
- 33) Is considered comparable to a standard between N/SVQ level 2 / City & Guilds level 2 and N/SVQ level 3 / City & Guilds level 3
- 34) Is considered comparable to a standard between Foundation Modern Apprenticeship and Advanced Modern Apprenticeship

NARIC Band 4:

- 41) Is considered comparable to GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level / Scottish Higher standard
- 42) Is considered comparable to VCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level / BTEC National Certificate / Scottish Higher standard

NARIC Band 5:

- 51) Is considered comparable to the overall GCE Advanced / Scottish Advanced Higher standard
- 52) Is considered comparable to Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) / BTEC National Diploma standard
- 53) Is considered comparable to N/SVQ level 3 / City & Guilds level 3 standard
- 54) Is considered comparable to Advanced Modern Apprenticeship / Modern Apprenticeship standard

NARIC Band 6:

- 62) Is considered comparable to a standard between BTEC National Diploma and BTEC Higher National Diploma standard
- 63) Is considered comparable to a standard between N/SVQ level 3 / City & Guilds level 3 and N/SVQ level 4 / City & Guilds level 4 standard

NARIC Band 7:

- 71) Is considered comparable to Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) / Year 1 of Bachelor degree standard
- 72) Is considered comparable to BTEC Higher National Certificate (HNC) standard

NARIC Band 8:

- 81) Is considered comparable to Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) / Year 2 of Bachelor degree standard
- 82) Is considered comparable to BTEC Higher National Diploma (HND) standard
- 83) Is considered comparable to N/SVQ level 4 / City & Guilds level 4 standard

NARIC Band 9:

- 91) Is considered comparable to British Bachelor (Ordinary) degree standard

NARIC Band 10:

- 101) Is considered comparable to British Bachelor (Honours) degree standard

NARIC Band 11:

- 111) Is considered comparable to British Postgraduate Certificate standard

NARIC Band 12:

- 121) Is considered comparable to British Postgraduate Diploma standard
- 123) Is considered comparable to N/SVQ level 5 standard

NARIC Band 13:

- 131) Is considered comparable to British taught Master's degree standard

NARIC Band 14:

- 141) Is considered comparable to British Master's degree standard

NARIC Band 15:

- 151) Is considered comparable to British Master of Philosophy degree (MPhil) standard

NARIC Band 16:

- 161) Is considered comparable to British Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD) standard

NARIC Band 17:

- 171) Is considered comparable to British Post Doctoral standard

A number of adjustments have been suggested to the NARIC Band structure, particularly to take account of the Qualification Frameworks across the UK, credit frameworks in general and different concepts of Bachelor degrees.

The issue of credit frameworks arose because they are closely linked in with country-specific qualification frameworks in many international systems. However, NARIC is looking to compile a broad structure into which to place the varied types of international qualification encountered, so it may prove counter-productive to focus heavily on a credit-based model for evaluation purposes. It may also switch the emphasis from outcomes to volume of study, which tends to be restrictive and inaccurate in an international context.

The third point of discussion has been the evaluation system currently used to examine Bachelor degree level awards. The Bachelor (Ordinary) and (Honours) designations are proving increasingly inconsistent with both international provision and the situation in the UK. A system using “British Bachelor degree standard” statement is therefore favoured, perhaps with the exception of those education systems also employing Ordinary and Honours degrees.

The following statements would follow a Bachelor degree statement to better describe the type of programme covered:

(a) The course of study leading to this qualification is based on a strongly multi-disciplinary curriculum. This may not in itself readily offer the extent of specialist knowledge or academic preparation normally demanded of students seeking to progress directly into a UK academic programme at postgraduate level

(b) The course of study leading to this qualification indicates that students have followed a specialist curriculum. The course also generally requires submission of a final thesis or dissertation, which is examined as part of the requirements for the award. Graduates are likely to be securely prepared for progression directly into a UK academic programme at postgraduate level

(c) The course of study leading to this qualification is under review and, while reforms continue in the national tertiary sector and its institutions, the outcome of these changes has yet to be fully documented in practice

NARIC Band Framework

NARIC Band Framework is developed on the basics of a coherent set of Descriptors for each NARIC Band.

These Descriptors are generic summaries and not designed to illustrate anything more than broad characteristics of international qualifications, such as its purpose (learning outcome) and progression possibilities. They do not generally outline specific details such as volume or particular units of study that are considered pre-requisites of awards at a given level. The format therefore differs from those used by standard setting bodies or qualification framework developers.

The current set of Descriptors have been created to facilitate discussion of the each designated level and its purpose.

Band Descriptors:

Band 0:

Qualifications falling below the first nationally assessed level in UK secondary schools and includes basic level adult education that also does not constitute a national award.

Band 1:

Awards at this level demonstrate a basic to moderate grasp of the principal elements of the given subject without demonstrating a deeper understanding or an ability to converse with its more technical aspects. In vocational areas, individuals would be directly supervised in the workplace.

Band 2:

Qualifications at this level provide holders with a solid grounding in the fundamental areas of the subject or occupation and allow progression to upper secondary / technician level awards.

Band 3:

International awards that fall between lower and upper secondary in standard, which provide a level of specialisation beyond that of a basic skilled worker.

Band 4:

Qualifications that provide for admission to higher education only in certain circumstances. Normally, the volume of study and degree of specialisation is insufficient for access to degree programmes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland, these awards may be considered more appropriate for higher education entry, as degrees are longer in duration.

Band 5:

Qualifications that closely match the higher education entrance level in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Equally, those that reflect workers demonstrating competences such as the application of knowledge in a broad range of varied work activities, with some responsibility or autonomy. See Scotland note under Level 4.

Band 6:

Qualifications, usually vocational, that go beyond the outcomes associated with first-level responsibilities, usually in a further education setting. These awards generally lack sufficient volume of tertiary level study to be considered higher education.

Band 7:

Qualifications that broadly match the outcomes associated with one year of full-time higher education or higher technician staff whose range of tasks are quite limited.

Band 8:

Qualifications that broadly match the outcomes associated with two years of full-time higher education or higher technician staff whose range of tasks are relatively broad.

Band 9:

The course of study leading to this qualification is based on a strongly multi-disciplinary curriculum. This may not in itself readily offer the extent of specialist knowledge or academic preparation normally demanded of students seeking to progress directly into a UK academic programme at postgraduate level.

Band 10:

The course of study leading to this qualification indicates that students have followed a specialist curriculum. The course also generally requires submission of a final thesis or dissertation, which is examined as part of the requirements for the award. Graduates are likely to be securely prepared for progression directly into a UK academic programme at postgraduate level.

Band 11:

Qualifications that provide further training, usually occupationally-specific in nature, for graduates and higher technicians. The programme is generally orientated towards classroom-based study, involve the minimum amount of academic study for a postgraduate award and often combine this with professional content.

Band 12:

Academically-based, postgraduate qualifications that are based predominantly upon classroom-based study and are usually designed for the purposes of further specialisation.

Band 13:

Second cycle higher education programmes that combine classroom-based study and a research element.

Band 14:

Second cycle higher education programmes with a strong orientation towards research work.

Band 15:

Postgraduate research awards with significant dissertations that may form the basis of doctoral programmes.

Band 16:

Awards that require the completion of a lengthy thesis based upon original research.

Band 17:

Post-Doctoral awards to reflect higher academic achievements, usually confined to university staff.

The NARIC Band framework therefore has two purposes. It is firstly an important method of categorising international qualifications. However, it is also a framework that enables the differences between the international awards to be expressed in a meaningful but relatively straightforward manner.

Principles of credential evaluation underpin the NARIC Band framework. It is important, and needs to be made clear, that the purpose of the classification is to illustrate the purpose of the qualification and its articulation onto further awards, rather than to provide strict guidelines to which an award must adhere. The Descriptors have been designed to underpin the Band framework and provide greater transparency of the system.