



Qualifications Explained

There are many different types of qualifications available and which are offered through schools, colleges, universities, employers and distance learning providers. Trying to put a value on your learning can be a difficult but important task, especially if you need it to achieve a particular goal. It is vital you check that any qualification you are about to take is accredited and given a value by somebody other than the provider of the course- unless you're doing something purely as a hobby or a way of relaxing.

If you are looking into distance learning, there are many valuable courses online with high quality providers. However, there are a significant number of worthless courses as well. Take the time to find out more before parting with any cash. If you are in any doubt at all, please contact us at Careers Guernsey for advice careersguernsey@gov.gg or check information on [Distance Learning](#) at www.careers.gg

Here are a few things that should help you with your qualification research.

Regulated qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are in either the:

- Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) or the
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are grouped into levels within these frameworks, from entry level to level 8.

You can check if a qualification is regulated and what level it is at <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>

Qualifications at the same level are a similar level of difficulty, but the size and content of the qualifications can vary.

Example: AS levels and A levels are both level 3, but you study AS levels over 1 year and A levels over 2 years. You'll therefore have a deeper knowledge of a subject if you've studied it at A level.

The levels are used in education and work to compare different qualifications. They also show how one qualification can lead on to other higher levels of qualifications.



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Examples of some qualifications are listed in the frameworks below. If your qualification is not listed here, check <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/> to find if it is registered and what level it is.

Level	Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) Examples	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Examples
8	Vocational Qualifications level 8	Doctorate (PhD)
7	BTEC Advanced Professional award, certificate and diploma level 7	Master's Degree Post Graduate Certificates and Diplomas
6	BTEC Advanced Professional award, certificate and diploma level 6	First Degree (Bachelor's) Graduate Diplomas Open University Level 3 courses
5	BTEC Professional award, certificate and diploma level 5	HND Foundation Degree Diploma of Higher Education Open University Level 2 courses
4	BTEC Professional award, certificate and diploma level 4 City and Guilds/NVQs at level 4 HNC	HNC Certificates of Higher Education Open University Level 1 courses
3	AS & A Levels BTEC award, certificates, and diploma at level 3 International Baccalaureate Key Skills level 3 City and Guilds/NVQs at level 3 Access to Higher Education Diploma Art Foundation Diploma	
2	GCSEs grades A*-C (or grades 9-4 from 2017 on) BTEC award, certificate and diploma level 2 City and Guilds/NVQs at level 2 Key Skills level 2 Skills for Life Functional Skills at Level 2	
1	GCSEs grades D-G (or grades 3-1 from 2017 on) BTEC award, certificate and diploma level 1 City and Guilds/NVQs at level 1 Key Skills level 1 Skills for Life level 1 Functional Skills at level 1 Foundation Learning level 1	
Entry	Entry level certificates English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Entry Level Skills for Life Functional Skills at entry level Foundation Learning at entry level	