

International Qualifications and the role of UK NARIC

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providing clarity. releasing potential

Who are UK NARIC?

UK NARIC is the National Agency responsible for providing information and expert opinion on vocational, academic and professional skills and qualifications from over 180 countries worldwide.

As the National Agency, managed on behalf of the UK Government, we provide the only official source of information on international qualifications...

- **serving member institutions**
- **serving the public**
- **technical assistance and knowledge sharing**

The role of a NARIC centre

NARIC Centres are responsible for the recognition of diplomas and periods of study in the Member States of the EU, the EEA countries and the associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Cyprus

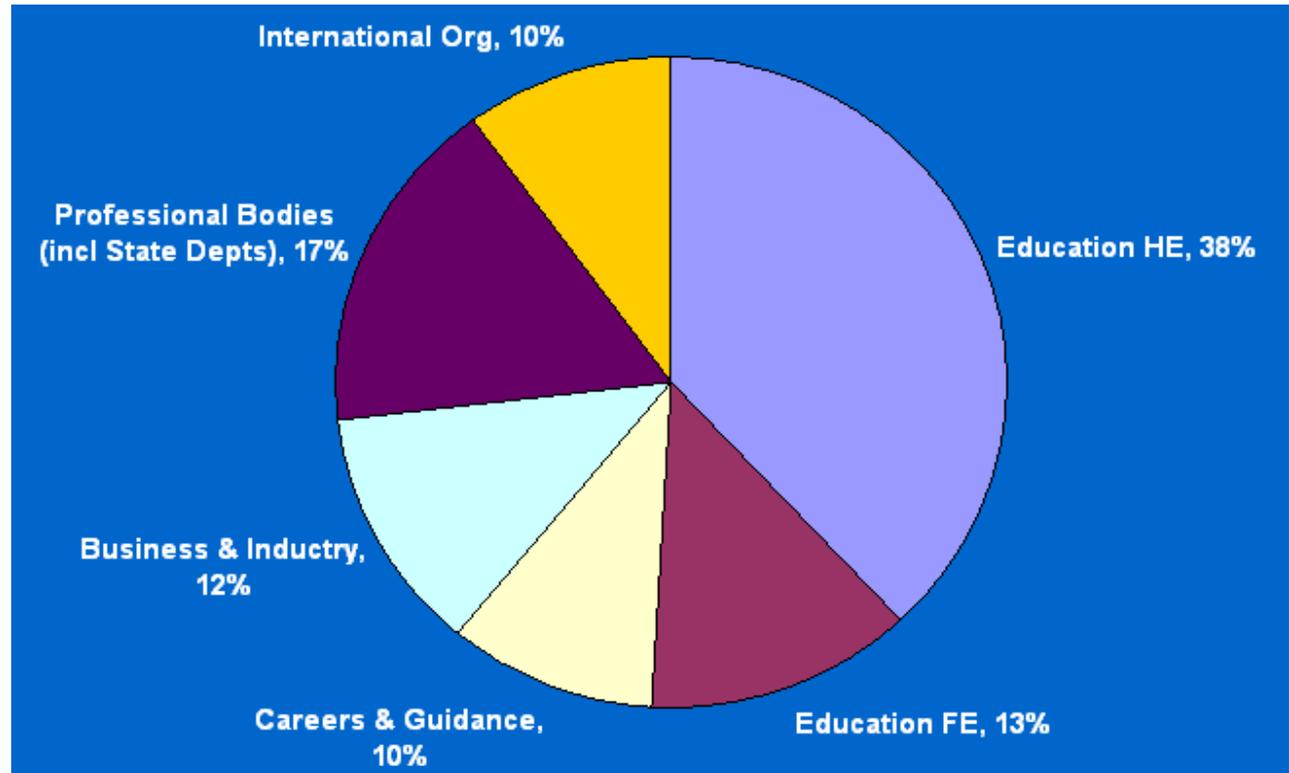
Different recognition procedures exist across Europe. Three examples include:

- **Greece:** traditional duration and content based assessment process
- **Netherlands:** complex assessment process, combining credential evaluation practices with new evaluation models such as accreditation of prior learning
- **Croatia:** emerging centre, still developing a methodological approach

The Work of the UK NARIC: Clients Data

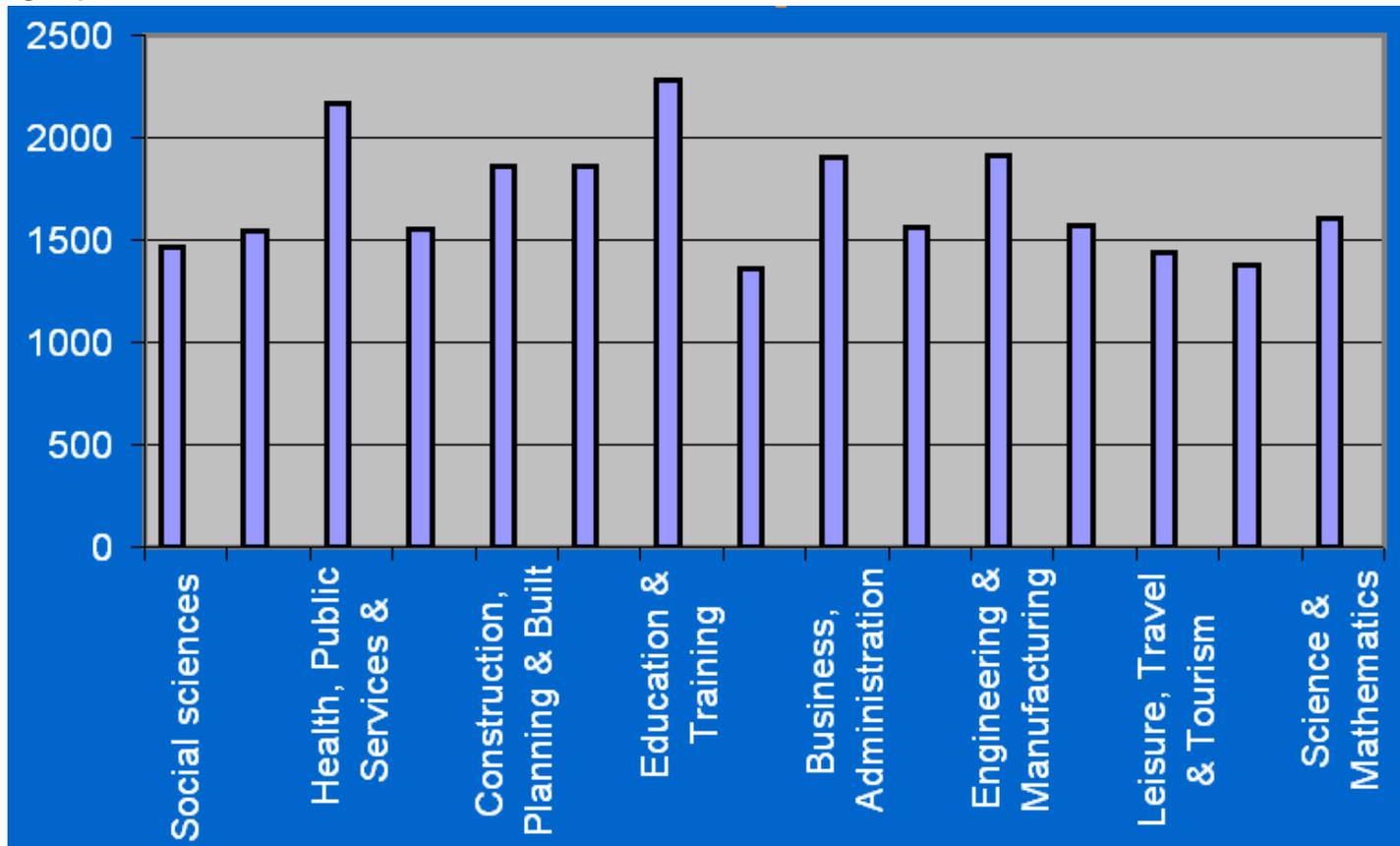
The UK NARIC serves over 1000 members in the UK and internationally.

Education and training sector continues to form a significant part of the membership base (2004-05 data).



The Work of the UK NARIC: Subject Matters

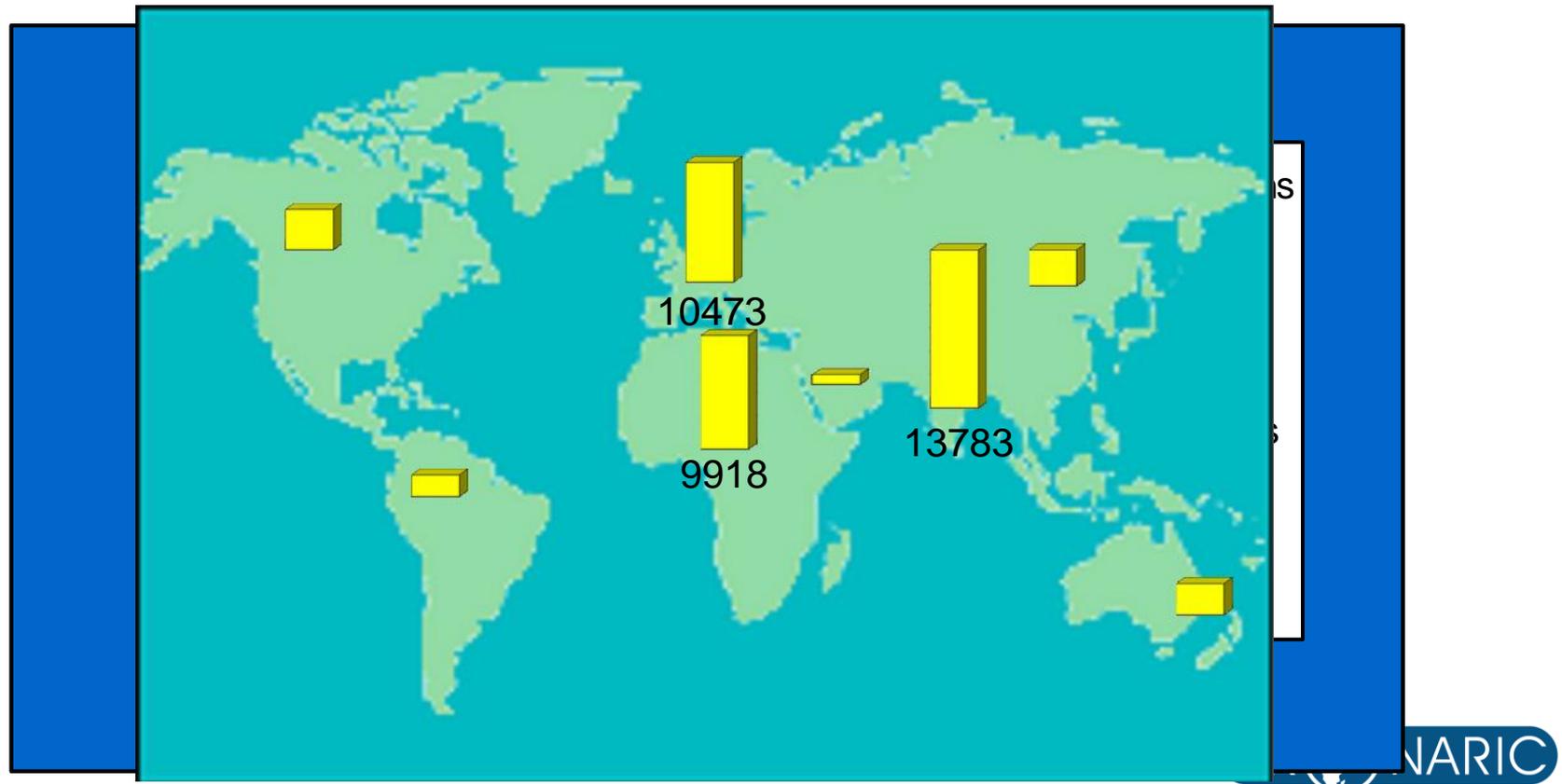
Although the information demand vary, there has been an identifiable interest in the provision of education and training in key occupations and subject areas such as Health Care, Teaching, Engineering, Construction and business management.



The Work of the UK NARIC: Coverage

NARIC processes on average 50,000 applications per annum for the purpose of further study and employment opportunities in the UK.

These applications demonstrate a notable concentration on qualifications from India-Subcontinent, Central and Eastern Europe and Africa (2006-07 data)



UK NARIC Methodology

Developing a *Code of Practice* to outline the purpose and the design of the work focusing on:

- Evaluation Criteria

- **Evaluation Criteria** need to reflect the concerns of the national system. These concerns centre on whether internationally trained applicants are:
 - adequately qualified to enter the further or higher education system in the country in question.
 - sufficiently well-trained to perform a certain occupational or professional role
- **Framework of bands of attainment** centred on
 - Learning outcomes and competencies
 - Qualifying measures e.g. credits, exams, assessments etc

- Processes and Procedures

- Transparent and fair procedures
- Appeals

- Service Standards

- Self-discipline and public monitoring measure

Current Developments and UK NARIC Methodology: The EQF

The European Qualifications Framework is an initiative to establish a meta qualifications framework across Europe, linking to national QFs (a priority of Copenhagen Declaration)

What is a meta framework?

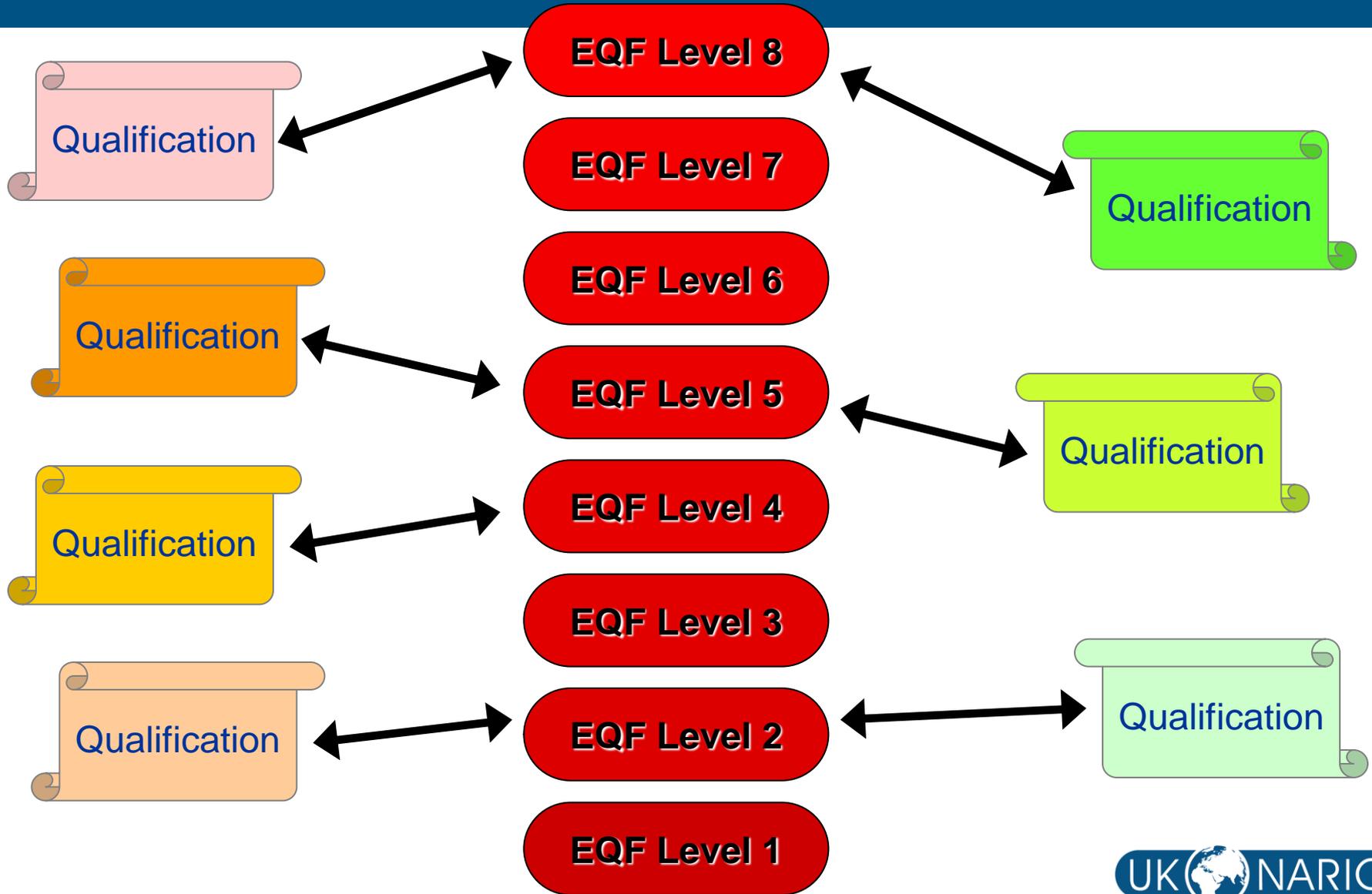
- A translation device between different qualification systems and their levels
 - Qualifications do not relate directly to EQF levels
 - Qualifications relate in the first place to national structures or systems of qualifications (i.e. frameworks)
 - National structures relate to EQF
- EQF is not proposed as a model for NQFs

To achieve this, EQF is envisaged to have:

- As few levels as possible
- As broad and encompassing as possible
- Requires generic descriptors

Country A

Country B



Will the EQF work well as a 'meta framework'?

At the current time, it is envisaged that national authorities will be responsible for determining linkages between national QFs and EQF. This causes problems because:

1. Many European countries are not familiar and do not fully understand the concept of learning outcomes
2. Differences in the perception of qualifications' status from one country to the next
3. Lack of a meaningful QA structure
4. There is the potential for qualification inflation, where countries pitch low level awards at a higher EQF level. Because the generic descriptors used are broad-based, there is room to adapt national wording to fit what is being requested.

As a contrast, UK NARIC use 18 bands into which we fit international qualifications, because this is the level of differentiation we feel is required to accurate variations in standard of all qualifications.

Analysis and Establishing Equivalence between different national QFs

Establishing Equivalence can be conducted by:

- Examining outcomes of qualifications in the formal education system ALTHOUGH this gives the study an overly academic focus, when frameworks look to ensure 'parity of esteem' between academic and vocational learning
- Examining occupational hierarchies ALTHOUGH occupational structures (classifications and status) vary from one country to the next
- Examining course / study material in similar fields of study ALTHOUGH this is a detailed and longer-term process
- Examining level descriptors ALTHOUGH by itself it is difficult to truly establish whether the concepts are accurately applied in the wider system

Therefore, all 4 aspects are important to consider when drawing linkages between different national QFs

Illustrating the Proposed Integrated Model for Recognition

