

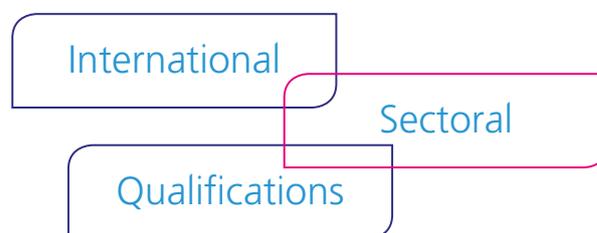


## INTERNATIONAL SECTORAL QUALIFICATIONS (ISQS) AND THEIR USE IN THE UK



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## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

### Foreword:

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership (SCQF Partnership) on behalf of the UK National Contact Points (NCPs) for the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) commissioned research into the use of international qualifications in the UK in April 2016.

The EQF Advisory Group has, in the last few years, been paying particular attention to the challenge of recognising “International” qualifications within both the EQF and National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs).

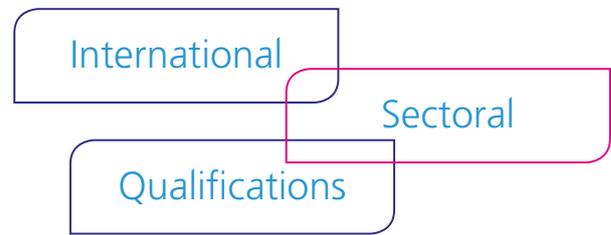
In this context international qualifications are considered those which have currency within multiple jurisdictions. The currency for these qualifications typically comes not from their official status as recognised by governments, regulators and framework owners but recognition by employers and employer bodies within the relevant industry. The work of the EQF advisory group has therefore focussed on these International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs).

As a result of the work of the ISQ sub group the UK EQF NCPs felt it was important to undertake a piece of research to better understand the ISQ situation in the UK, “We wanted to know what makes certain qualifications attractive to both employers and learners in the international context and then see whether there would be any added value of linking these into UK Frameworks.”

Recognition across the UK nations differs for this qualification type so it was key to explore examples from across economic sectors to better understand the landscape and potential drivers and needs of the future.

The research was conducted over the Summer of 2016 and covered the period before and after the referendum on the UK membership of the European Union. The UK EQF National Contact Points consider the outcome of the referendum had a negative impact on the confidence of some respondents to engage in the research (since it was EU related). However, towards the end of the research when the need for the UK to establish stronger links outside the EU became more prominent in public discourse, respondents became more interested in the issue of making progress in recognising qualifications that are international in nature. Following this trend, it is likely that the use of international qualifications, grown in the UK or developed overseas, is likely to be more important in future.

**Aileen Ponton,**  
Chair, UK EQF NCPs



## Acknowledgements:

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Thanks also to those who provided vital and useful data and reports including: Katarzyna Kraszewska from European Statistical Data Support (ESDS) EUROSTAT; Chiao-Ling Chien from UNESCO; James Windell, SKILLS at ILO.

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

### Executive Summary:

Over the past four years there has been an increase in research activities across Europe looking to understand the range of sector-recognised certificates and qualifications of good quality being awarded outside of national systems and processes.

Previous research studies conducted by CEDEFOP<sup>1</sup>, Academic Information Centre Latvia<sup>2</sup> and the DG Education and Culture tendered Survey on International Sectoral Qualifications<sup>3</sup> indicated varying levels of engagement with these types of qualifications, finding a range of user groups.

The UK picture on the use of International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) was not clear and to gain insight on potential needs for changes to national frameworks this research was commissioned.

The UK market is well established within the 'traditional' national qualification framework approaches including the use of learning outcomes, completion of stringent assessment protocols, and a thriving education and training provider sector supported by recognition through UK authorities.

Two key themes emerged during this research study on the UK perspective of ISQs:

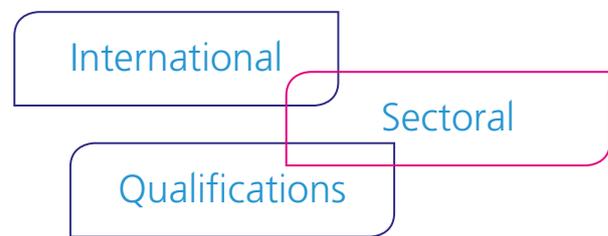
1. Many courses, competency frameworks and qualifications could meet the ISQ definition apart from one point; originating outside of the home nations. Many international qualifications originate in the UK and are used globally including within the UK;
2. Many ISQs referred to in other studies or listed by employers and sector organisations, may meet the definition ordinarily, but often have been formally recognised within the UK to improve the learner uptake, and saleability of the products by UK providers to the rest of the world. Having complied with the 'gold standard' of qualification recognition is a unique selling point to buyers across the globe.

The recent European Commission 'International (sectoral) qualifications and the EQF' Explanatory note, circulated in November 2016 at the end of this project, supports the need to address these two themes. They propose the separation of the terms international qualification and international sectoral qualification, with the latter being much broader and flexible in definition, '*allowing for sector labour market needs*'. Work is ongoing to also separate/redefine the meaning of a suite of ISQs and international sectoral standards. Overall, they conclude the, '*development of ISQs...is a direct reflection of the globalisation and digitisation of economies and labour markets*'. This is an encouraging reflection on the issues and drivers found in the UK ISQ market.

<sup>1</sup>International qualifications; Luxembourg: 2012; ISBN 978-92-896-1117-6; No of publication: 4116 EN

<sup>2</sup>International Qualifications in Latvia – National Coordination Point" (554118-EPP-1-2014-1-LV-EPPKA3EQF-NCP)

<sup>3</sup>DG Education and Culture FC Lot 1 Order no 81: Feb 2015: ICF, Danish Technological Institute, Technopolis Group, 3S report one Survey on national procedures for linking ISQ 2015



Several sectors and providers reported that the UK is ‘an exporter of qualifications, not an importer’ however this does not mean the UK is ignoring the international market, or does not see the benefit of cross-border qualifications. In fact, most UK awarding organisations and many training providers have dedicated international departments to build use of a range of base curriculum that can then be contextualised as needed or used as presented. From here they will take lessons learnt and best practice to improve their UK offers. It was found that it is getting increasingly difficult to classify UK from non-UK, as separate quantities. Awarding organisations and training providers want to avoid duplication and need to meet the needs of an increasingly globalized market.

As with other studies completed on international qualifications, the UK shows a strong relation between type of international qualification and the sector, occupation or profession it relates to. Qualifications in the Aviation sector give an example of the international dimension as the sector is globalized with uniformity in standards of practice, and compliance with regulations. In Engineering, the international welding qualifications are integral to the UK, monitored and reviewed by a dedicated professional association.

This study purposefully kept to three key, clear objectives to achieve the data needed. These are explored in depth across the report with highlights indicated below:

1. To what extent ISQs are being used in the UK and whether or not this practice is growing?
  - Large multinational organisations use of ISQs gives brand control without the need for contextualisation
  - There is an established tradition of using UK standards and competency frameworks. Sectors would adopt international standards if quality needs met. Heavily regulated sectors, in terms of safety and practice, are more likely to have strict recognition requirements
  - Issues of quality and transparency are raised with vendor qualifications
  - Though many more potential ISQs exist and are used in the UK these often miss one or two points of the current definition and therefore could not be included in this study
2. Who offers these ISQs and why?
  - UK Professional associations, sectoral bodies, awarding organisations, and employers can all potentially deliver a variant of ISQ especially if the definition is extended. Higher Education Institutions & Further Education centres current ISQ offers are embedded within courses but some are starting to look at other models with standalone recognition
  - Private training providers may deliver ISQs but mainly opt for versions that are accredited or recognised by national authorities as this is what clients expect. Many have international approval as deliverers so meet the definition but also have UK approvals

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

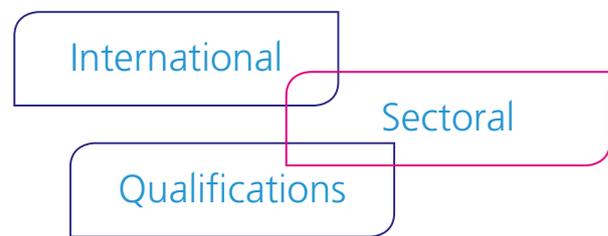
3. Would there be value in formal recognition of these qualifications on all the UK NQFs?
  - Most stakeholders automatically expect formal recognition, or assume recognition will have been achieved in the originating country
  - Larger organisations would prefer to do the process once; most appealing is EQF
  - Some organisations are concerned about control of the content e.g. brand values
  - One interesting benefit described by a respondent; the NQFs provide access to the national sector, and being able to join those at the forefront who are shaping it is useful

With many aspects of the 2016 EU Skill Agenda<sup>4</sup> calling for an increase in international experience, international learning and identifying growing, evolving professions it is clear that the future will present a more globalised approach. Whilst there are good lessons to learn from the UK on different approaches to qualification type and delivery such as the recognition of international competency frameworks and international skills standard setting and measuring, under the current ISQ definition the UK does not have a strong ISQ market. If the definition changes in the future to incorporate a more global view regardless of originating nation, then the UK will be at the forefront of developments.

**‘Online credentials and international qualifications are discussed as new developments that are gaining traction across the globe and cannot be ignored...and the potential emergence of a fourth generation of qualifications frameworks’**

UNESCO Level-setting and recognition of learning outcomes report

<sup>4</sup> A NEW SKILLS AGENDA FOR EUROPE: Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness {SWD(2016) 195}



# 1. Setting the Scene

This research project was commissioned as a result of the limited collated information about International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) in the UK. There is a good, and developing, level of information detailing the context in other European nations, which has helped to shape and frame the research completed in the UK.

The research was needed to establish the 'state of play' within the UK. It analysed and measured ISQ use, and their value on the labour market. There are large variations in companies, organisations and other bodies developing, providing and awarding ISQs including international organisations, international sector and branch bodies, multinational businesses and EU bodies.

It is important to know to what extent ISQs are being used in the UK, and whether this practice is growing, who offers these ISQs and why. The answers to these questions will help shape the future development of the different National Qualifications Frameworks models (NQFs<sup>5</sup>) across the UK. Also this information could be used to identify any further clarification needed to explain the qualifications sector to all those who come into contact with it, including individual learners, employers or awarding organisations.

It was agreed with the UK EQF NCPs that the study would focus on five key economic sectors: Administration and support services; Health and social work; hospitality; ICT; and Science, production and engineering. The key stakeholders were identified as employers, recruiters, professional associations, sector bodies and awarding organisations.

Currently, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) has several ISQs on the framework, as does the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) as the single framework for describing all regulated qualifications in England and Northern Ireland, and the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW). These are not separately categorised within the frameworks but are accepted through the usual accreditation and quality procedures based on a learning outcomes approach. As the value or currency of ISQs is often recognised by employers and multinational organisations within the relevant industry and not officially recognised by governments, regulators and framework owners, these ISQs could not form part of the research as they do not meet the scope of sitting outside of national authority processes.

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<sup>5</sup> The general overarching term NQF is used in this report to cover the UK frameworks for each nation

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

An early challenge identified for the research study was the separation of ISQs from NQFs and being able to adequately cover the non-formal, 'non-state' qualifications. A situational review completed in May 2016 began with looking at the NQFs to identify potential awarding organisations, institutes and confederations operating in the arena who may either:

- a) classify their NQF qualifications as ISQs; or
- b) run bespoke training, professional courses etc. outside of the NQF.

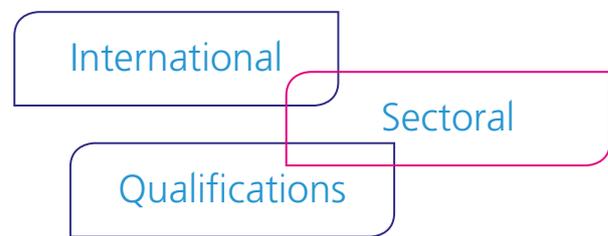
From reviewing their websites, and from two initial discussions, linking to the NQF was seen as a commercial advantage within international markets; a sign of robust and high quality products.

Another early issue emerged from the initial research; defining international networks, or the degree of involvement and recognition of international bodies outside of the UK. There appears to be evidence of some involvement from awarding organisations, institutes and confederations but further exploration was needed to verify the extent of this. A study completed by ICF/3S<sup>6</sup> in 2015 had similar issues stating, *'These descriptions again highlight countries' different notions of what can be considered as an ISQ. In particular, the case of national qualifications, which are based on international standards – and which seem to be considered as ISQ in some countries'*

Despite these early issues there was also a good level of information to start developing the research. The following sections of the report detail the scope and range of the research conducted.

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<sup>6</sup> DG Education and Culture FC Lot 1 Order no 81: Feb 2015: ICF, Danish Technological Institute, Technopolis Group, 3S report one Survey on national procedures for linking ISQ 2015



## 2. What is meant by International Sectoral Qualifications?

The ISQ subgroup, established in March 2014, proposed the following working definition for an ISQ:

***An “International Sectoral Qualification” is a certificate, diploma, degree or title awarded by an international body (or a national body accredited by an international body) and used in more than one country which includes learning outcomes (based on standards developed by an international sectoral organisation or an international company) relevant to a sector of economic activity.***

After further analysis of EQF meeting papers and the ISQ sub-group, further explanation of the definition was identified. This helped to set the scope of the UK study so it would cover qualifications of any size, based or not based on the learning outcomes approach.

To meet the definition of ISQ the qualifications identified must be stand-alone and used internationally within a sector or a profession and have a value on the labour market in more than one country. More specifically, the study covers the following which will be collectively referred to as ISQs within this report:

- Stand-alone qualifications, sequences (or families) of qualifications or qualification standards designed and defined by European or international organisations;
- Qualifications or standards which regulate a certain profession or promote good practice in a given professional field (for example the international standards in the field of welding, maritime, transport or aviation);
- Qualifications or competence frameworks designed by sectoral associations representing a range of businesses in a given field or by other organisations with an international scope of action. For example, the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding managed by the European Agency Frontex;
- Qualifications designed and awarded by private companies and used broadly across the EU and beyond.

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

The main focus was on qualifications with international reach, used and known in several countries. Initial research also showed that some other terms were more commonly used in the UK to describe ISQs including:

- Vendor qualifications e.g. Google, Microsoft, Oracle, PRINCE2
- Multinationals' courses e.g. learning packages for well known hotel groups, insurance groups and banking groups
- Stateless qualifications e.g. those not recognised on formal or legal national frameworks but are recognised, and key, to a sector

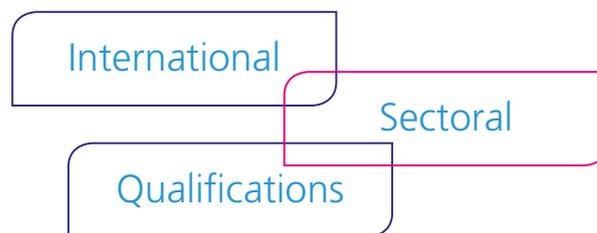
These terms were included in the production of marketing materials, articles and surveys to help engage with stakeholders fully and begin conversations to bring out the use of ISQs in the UK.

### 3. Existing studies on International Sectoral Qualifications

A comprehensive literature review was completed of existing studies, to gain insights which may support the UK study. These provided an overview of the general ISQ landscape across parts of Europe, as well as employer skills drivers within the UK. Highlights from some of these reports, which supported the development of this project, can be found in Annex 1.

**'It is increasingly difficult to classify UK, and non-UK, as Awarding Organisations try to avoid duplication, and need to meet globalized needs but still meet national requirements. UK quals are adaptable to international markets even if branded as UK only. Training providers' attitudes are changing too with globalization, and the stateless definition worked at the time but needs updating to reflect changing times.'**

International Recognition Department,  
Awarding Organisation outcomes report



## 4. Methodology for capturing UK International Sectoral Qualifications data

The research conducted for this study included a range of qualitative and quantitative approaches. These were selected to access the widest range of identified stakeholders across the economic sectors.

### Summary of methodologies used:

Methodology	Aims
<b>Desk research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline existing available data</li> <li>• Identify organisations active in ISQs</li> <li>• Identify organisations who potentially engage with ISQs</li> <li>• Website reviews</li> <li>• NQF reviews</li> <li>• Product reviews e.g. training programmes, competency frameworks</li> <li>• European and International research papers</li> <li>• Collection of European and International statistics regarding continuing vocational education, continuing training and education, in-house training for reference of ISQs, and potential identification of drivers in the future</li> </ul>
<b>Survey 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 'full' survey asking a range of questions across the three study objectives</li> <li>• Detailed feedback collection from those already engaging in ISQ with a high awareness/ understanding</li> <li>• Confirmation that assumptions made in desk research are correct</li> <li>• Some questions taken from existing studies to allow direct comparison</li> </ul>
<b>Survey 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 'full' survey cut into three shorter sections, sent on weekly basis, to help break down the time required to complete the information</li> </ul>
<b>Survey 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 'quick' survey asking the key/main questions for each study objective</li> <li>• General feedback collection from those who may not identify as using ISQs or are unsure of the definition</li> </ul>
<b>One-to-one discussions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative, in-depth discussions</li> <li>• Across sectors and stakeholder groups</li> <li>• Collecting daily practice examples, exploring links to NQF/EQF in detail</li> <li>• Questions linked to study objectives and using similar wording to online surveys for consistency of response</li> </ul>
<b>Meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking within pre-arranged meetings informally as part of 'Any other business' or as formal agenda item to raise awareness</li> <li>• Gain knowledge of recognition of definition, common ISQs in use and other areas of research to consider</li> </ul>

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

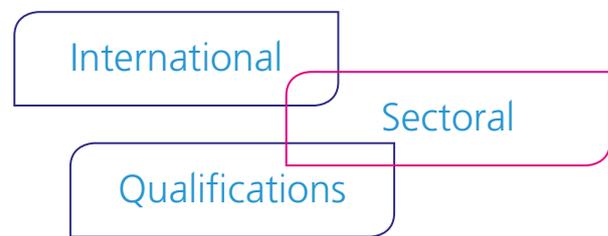
<b>Case studies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A selection of in-depth examples of different approaches to ISQs across sectors and stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Expert workshops</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two meetings with UK Coordination Group Vocational Education Initiatives (UKCGVETI); awareness raising/guidance on avenues or contacts to further research; validation of results. This included all NCPs plus other key stakeholders from: Scottish Government, NARIC, City &amp; Guilds, Welsh Government, SQA, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, Federation for Industry Skills &amp; Standards, Quality and Qualifications Ireland, English Government, Federation of Awarding Bodies, Ecorys, Careers Europe, and Northern Ireland Government.</li> </ul>

### Promotion of research study:

Information sheets were developed and social media suggestions with hashtag recommendations were circulated to spread awareness of the study. A total of four articles were created and shared with contacts to post on websites and social media: a full-length article, a short article, an article about the quick-fire surveys and a dedicated Higher Education Institutions article. Template emails were also circulated to contacts to reach out to their networks.

Approximately 30,003 subscribers received newsletters, tweets, LinkedIn and Facebook articles. Over 285,000 web visitors navigated sites with the news articles featured. Appendix 1 details the circulation achieved by partners in the research project.

Internet research was completed to try and identify any 'self-posting' websites for sharing news and consultations with specific stakeholders and/or sectors. There were no such websites found to reach those within the scope of the study.



## 5. International Sectoral Qualifications in Practice

This section explores the results of the research conducted in line with the research methodology used.

### 5.1 Findings of the desk research

#### Desk research activities

As described in section 4, desk research started with a comprehensive literature review. Open source research was completed in three different stages; looking for enquiry leads through the NQF databases; internet research, and; additional datasets e.g. through Eurostat and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

The SCQF has approximately 14 bodies who may also deliver qualifications which meet the definition of ISQs. From these there are over 60 qualifications which may be used internationally. The Regulated Qualifications Framework has approximately 19 bodies who may also deliver qualifications which meet the definition of ISQs. From these there are over 300 qualifications which may be used internationally. The CQFW has 6 bodies registered against their Quality Assured Lifelong Learning pillar. All of these qualifications do not meet the requirements of the research as they have NQF recognition. However, it gave an interesting early indication to different approaches taken to ISQ recognition, demonstrating that some international bodies see the value in alignment to NQFs. Examples of these qualifications can be found in Appendix 2.

The initial internet research provided 105 leads which were explored further to determine suitability of both the delivery organisation and the course offer to the scope of the study. Each potential organisation was emailed, and followed up with telephone calls where possible. The search terms used can be found in Appendix 3. The list below indicates some of the main findings by sector, with more detail and references available in Appendix 4.

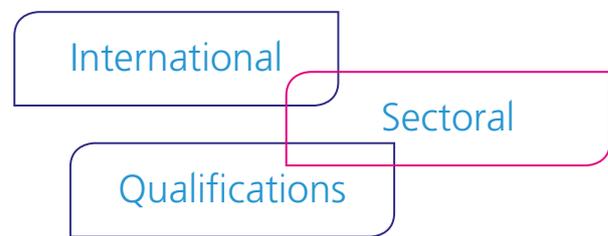
## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

### Administration and support services

- Squared Online is a partnership between Google and Home Learning College, endorsed by the IPA and IAB and accredited by CPD, therefore does not meet current definition for ISQs to be outside of national body recognition
- Association of International Accountants is a Prescribed Body under the Companies (Auditing and Accounting) Act 2003 in the Republic of Ireland and also have supervisory status for our members under the UK Money Laundering Regulations 2007. AIA is also recognised by the Commonwealth as an Accredited Organisation. The AIA professional qualification is currently recognised in over 30 countries worldwide
- CIMA is the world's largest and leading professional body of management accountants, work at the heart of business in industry, commerce and not for profit organisations meeting the ISQ definition
- IFS Learning: the Certificate in International Trade and Finance (CITF®) is a QCF Level 3 qualification to enable trade, export and commodity executives to gain a thorough understanding of key procedures, practices and legislation in trade finance on an international level. As an International Trade Course it has been developed in consultation with trade finance experts from across the world but does not meet the ISQ definition as it has formal recognition via the RQF.

### Health and social work

- Through worldwide activities, FAIMER combines its own expertise with that of local experts to create meaningful and sustained improvements in the systems that produce health care providers and deliver health care. They were not aware of any potential ISQs used in their sector, nor specifically in the UK
- WFME's primary objective is to enhance the quality of medical education worldwide, with promotion of the highest scientific and ethical standards in medical education. They develop standards in medical education which may potentially meet the ISQ definition, but information on use in the UK was not readily available
- HCPC are a regulator, and were set up to monitor health and care professionals in England and Wales to meet standards for training, professional skills, behaviour and health. As a heavily regulated area of practice, no ISQs are recognised, as use of international standards is not accepted
- NISCC monitors social care workers in Northern Ireland; setting standards for their conduct and practice and supporting their professional development but are also heavily regulated
- The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is the regulator for the social service workforce in Scotland. Again, they set standards for their practice based on UK/Scottish standards only.



## Hospitality

- The Institute of Hospitality has developed a suite of international Management Qualifications which may meet some aspects of the ISQ definition, but not all especially as the courses will have been written in the UK
- City & Guilds offer 5 international hospitality qualifications; Food preparation and culinary arts, accommodation operations & services, reception operation services, food and beverage services, and barista skills using international experts and standards where available
- Ashburton Chefs Academy incorporate the highest level, accredited chef qualifications within their courses that are recognised (through NEBOSH) and valued by employers around the world. However, this level of recognition again puts them outside of the ISQ definition
- Cordon Bleu advised that their qualifications do not fit into the ISQ model as they offer internal awards and NCFE validation in the UK. The Le Cordon Bleu London qualification itself is internal and not accredited internationally, only through local agreements with universities and awarding bodies.

## ICT

- Google Analytics Individual Qualifications (IQ) are courses and exams with Google certificates to show proficiency in use of Google Analytics. Completed online, these meet the definition of ISQs
- Computeach deliver multiple industry accredited qualifications that are highly valued by employers including Microsoft and CISCO courses. They hold Microsoft Gold Partner for Learning status and are accredited by CompTIA and CIW, amongst others, suggesting they may meet the ISQ definition with certain courses
- BCS, Chartered Institute of IT, offers over 60 internationally recognised certificates covering 11 core subject areas including: software testing; IT service management; PRINCE2; Green IT.

## Science, production and engineering

- The Science Council set the standards for professional registration for practising scientists and science technicians, independent of scientific discipline. Professional bodies within their membership are licensed to award members who meet these standards, including potential ISQs
- The Engineering Council sets and maintains the internationally recognised standards of professional competence and ethics that govern the award and retention in Engineering roles as well as recognising Dublin Accord, Sydney Accord and Washington Accord qualifications. Other than the European Welding qualifications no courses, qualifications or competency frameworks known to the Council were believed to meet the ISQ definition at the time of this study.

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

As can be seen from this early research there is a variety of providers across the sectors, delivering a range of offers some of which meet the ISQ definition. The majority however will either have originated in the UK, and/or be recognised within national frameworks or through national, chartered organisations. From these examples, it began to emerge that the ISQ definition is too constrictive for the UK market.

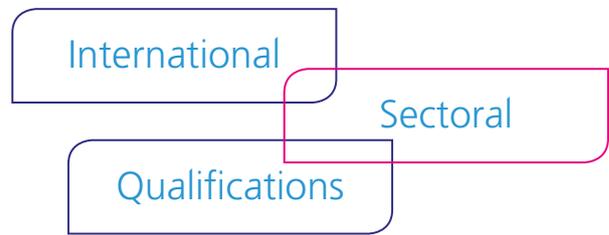
A third stage of additional desk research was required. Searches in this stage included job adverts in each of the economic sectors to see where potential ISQs were requested as essential or desirable requirements for different roles. This led to a further 95 contacts being made with key employers as well as recruiters. In addition, the UKCGVETI group of experts provided valuable feedback of their own experiences in the field, and suggested seeking further data sets from international organisations such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

### 5.2 Findings of the quantitative data

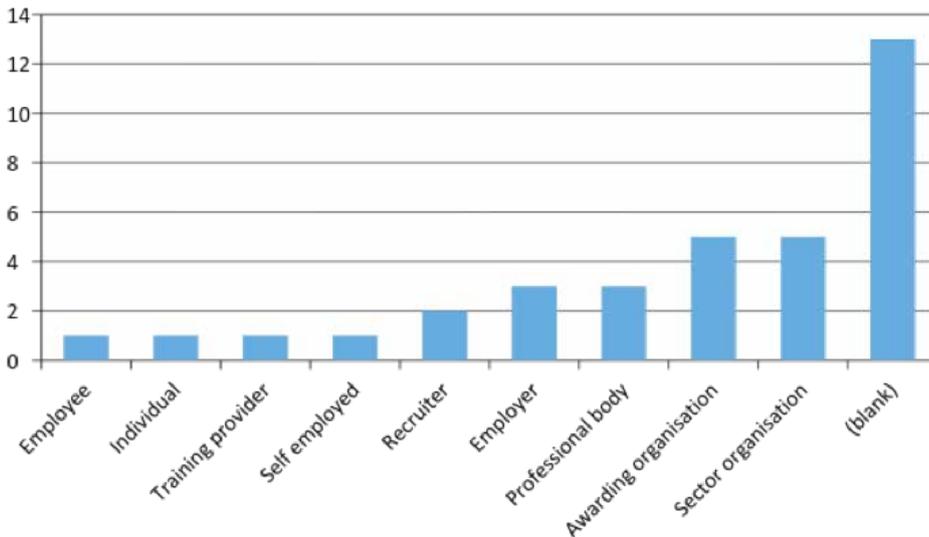
This part of the report presents highlights of the online consultation analysis, surveys that were deployed to a cross-section of ISQ stakeholders between June and September. Further detail can be found in Appendix 5. Approximately 220 stakeholders were directly targeted with additional awareness raising activities circulating to approximately 30,003 contacts/followers. 35 survey responses were received. This presented the second finding, engagement in the UK with the 'brand' of ISQs is relatively low even when using additional support terms such as stateless and vendor qualifications.

#### Stakeholder types

The study sought to profile the respondents according to the type of stakeholder groups they represent. Results are presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Share of respondents by stakeholder types (respondents could select more than one category)



Awarding and Sector organisations accounted for more than one-quarter of the total respondents.

### Definition of ISQs

The stakeholders were presented with the ISQ definition listed in section 2 of this report. They were asked if the definition matches their understanding of what ISQs represent. Approximately 7 in 10 respondents agreed that the definition matched their understanding of what ISQs are, with 2 in 10 reporting that they were unsure, and 1 in 10 disagreeing with the definition. Two of the respondents who indicated that they are unsure reported that they had never come across the definition.

**Table 1:** Respondents who understood the definition of ISQs by region

Region	Share (%)
East Midlands	3.85
London	7.69
Northern Ireland	11.54
Scotland	23.08
South West	0.00
Wales	3.85
West Midlands	3.85

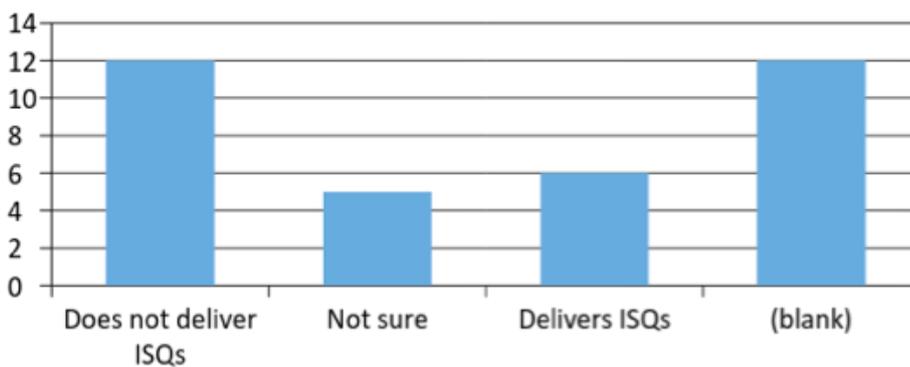
## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

Those respondents who indicated that they understood the definition of ISQs were stratified by geography. The results presented in Table 1 show the dominance of Scotland and Northern Ireland. It is suspected this is due to the fact Scottish participants are potentially more engaged in adding their courses to the national framework as several of the benefits of ISQs match to the benefits of the SCQF such as; control of content and designing to specific brand needs.

### Delivery of ISQs

One of the objectives of this study was to gauge the depth and breadth of delivery of ISQs across the country. Consultation participants were asked if their organisations deliver ISQs.

**Figure 2:** Delivery of ISQs

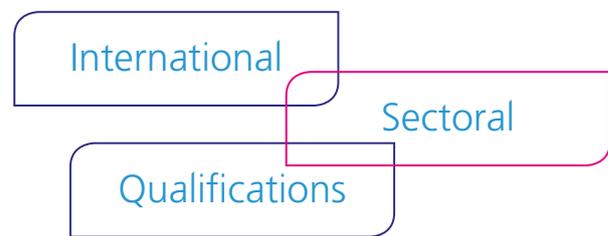


Results shown in Figure 2 indicated that less than 20% of the respondents deliver ISQs. Those organisations that do not deliver ISQs (34%) however noted that they recognise ISQs within their sectors.

### Design, Delivery, Awarding and Recognition of Specific ISQs

This study sought to profile respondents by whether they design, deliver, award, recognise and/or maintain the use of specific ISQs. Analysis of the responses show marked variations.

Respondents were asked to self-categorise whether they design, deliver, award or recognise ISQs which were broken down to 7 types; competence framework; sectoral framework; qualification standard(s) for several occupations; qualification standard(s) for one occupation; interrelated qualifications; qualifications independent of each other, and; stand-alone qualifications. Across all groups the competence framework was the most common form of engagement with ISQs followed by standards either for several or one occupation. Recognition of specific ISQs was the stand out category which suggests the UK is already far ahead in terms of the benefits of formal, national



recognition. However, the response rate was not reflected in the delivery category which may indicate that international deliverers are being used e.g. through online learning more than deliverers ‘on-the ground’. Detailed results are presented in Appendix 5.

## Origins of ISQs

Participants were asked to indicate the countries or regions from which their ISQs originated. Most ISQs (11%) originated from the United Kingdom. Approximately 6% of respondents indicated that their ISQs do not necessarily originate from a single country, rather the ISQs are perceived to have world-wide origins. Three countries (China, India and New Zealand) accounted for 3% each. The remaining did not respond or selected that they were unaware of the origins.

## Major ISQs

When asked to name the titles of ISQs referred to when answering the design, delivery, award and recognition matrix, the list included:

- |                                     |                                     |                       |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • General training certificate      | • Professional Standards            | • Google              |
| • Professional training certificate | • Chartered Banker                  | • Oracle Academy/Java |
| • Customer Service                  | • Professional Banking certificates | • CISCO               |
| • IATA                              | • World Host                        | • CIM                 |
| • ACCA                              | • Welding Institute                 | • ECDL                |
| • CIPD                              | • CIMA                              | • SFIA+               |
| • Professional qualifications       | • ICAS                              | • Accountancy         |
| • Competency frameworks             | • Microsoft                         |                       |

The survey respondents specified some of the major ISQs on offer within their respective sectors. The major ISQs, which meet the ISQ definition include:

- CIPD
- ACCA
- Potentially some competency frameworks such as SFIA+
- World Host
- CIMA
- IT vendor courses from Microsoft/Google/Oracle/Java/CISCO
- ECDL
- Potentially some professional qualifications in the banking, finance and accountancy though further detail would be required to confirm

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

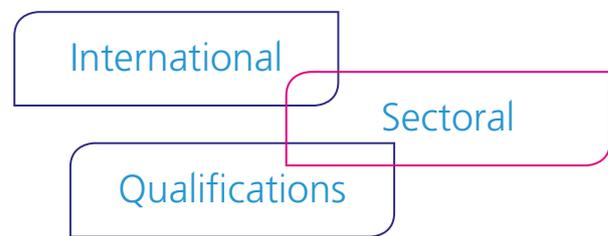
However, it should be noted that several of these originate in the UK, so despite using international standards, and being international bodies with international clients, they miss the current definition in terms of originating outside of the country of use.

Despite the high levels of respondents believing they understand the definition of ISQs, when exploring further they included courses which do not meet the definition, such as nationally recognised courses created and provided by national authorities, or offers which have been incorporated into UK courses so miss the need for ISQs to be stand alone qualifications. This supports both early key findings; that the definition restricts the UK market, and; engagement with the brand of ISQs is low in the UK.

**Table 2:** Major ISQs in Latvia

Sector	ISQs
Tourism	AHLEI TedQual
Welding	DVS PersZert European welding qualification ISO 9606
Project Management	PMP PRINCE2
Finance, Accountancy and Audit	ACCA CIA Study module "Finance management" certified by the SQA
Information and Communications Technology	Adobe qualifications Cisco qualifications IBM qualifications ITIL qualifications Microsoft qualifications LINUX qualifications Oracle qualifications CompTIA qualifications ECDL

Results from the UK survey were compared with results of a similar survey conducted in Latvia where participants were asked to list the major ISQs in their different sectors. Table 2 shows the major ISQs awarded in Latvia by sector with the commonalities with the UK findings highlighted in pink. Whilst the list does not necessarily mirror the precise responses provided by UK stakeholders, anecdotal evidence and desk research supports the notion that the ISQs used by these sectors in both countries are similar.



## Advantages of ISQs

ISQs offer stakeholders a variety of advantages. Based on responses from both the online consultation and the qualitative research, customer trust and the enhancement of performance were the key advantages recorded by the survey participants. Other benefits of ISQs include improved service delivery, knowledge of best practice, raising professional standards, skills and knowledge enhancement and a means for differentiating individuals from the crowd.

There seems to be a convergence when the results from the Latvian consultation are compared with the UK results. For stakeholders in Latvia, the major benefits offered by ISQs include:

- Promoting competitiveness in the labour market
- International popularity
- Specific, thorough and up-to-date knowledge
- Harmonising qualification system
- Ensuring opportunity to have an objective comparison of qualification holders' knowledge
- Skills and competences enhancement

Respondents to the Latvian survey also raised the fact that ISQs have the potential to boost the salaries of owners of those qualifications whilst providing some form of social guarantee at the same time.

## Drawbacks of ISQs

Whilst ISQs deliver numerous benefits, respondents across both the quantitative and qualitative research also alluded to drawbacks presented by ISQs. The major challenges relate to constrictions of the current definition with the UK, and the cost of ISQs as self-financing developments.

In the first issue, as explored throughout the report, the definition does not work for the UK market. Many ISQs originate in the UK, using UK standards and providers that are used globally. Multinational companies will often commission their ISQs from UK organisations to roll-out first in the UK and then implement through their global networks. Also, with a history of 15 years plus of using national qualification frameworks, this practice of recognition is well established and more likely to have taken place than in nations with frameworks which are in early stages of implementation.

The second issue of costs revolves around the cost of development in-house, and the issue that as ISQs are not individually categorised within the national frameworks, or for those that do sit outside public authorities' recognition, there is often no state-funding to support learners to access these courses. This is also a finding in the recent CEDEFOP/DG-EMPL ISQ study which finds that recognition on the EQF would improve opportunities for public funding. High costs exclude people and can impact workforce diversity.

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

A third interesting drawback raised by two respondents was the risk of self-referencing - a situation where certain ISQs do not consult other recognised sectors or bodies of knowledge or areas of best or innovative practice.

The UK results were compared with results of the Latvian analysis in order to test for convergence or divergence in opinions. The major drawbacks in Latvia are related to the issues with how to introduce these qualifications in different sectors, especially those who do not operate on an international level. Like the UK respondents, the Latvian respondents also reported that high costs for obtaining an international qualification has a detrimental effect.

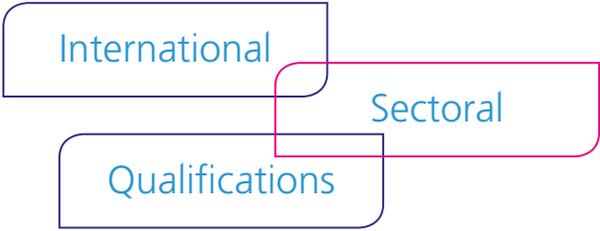
### 5.3 Findings of the qualitative data: Awarding Organisations

In-depth conversations were held with four awarding organisations of varying size and sectoral focus. At an early stage of the research, this group showed that the UK qualifications market is well-established, having many years of experience with learning outcomes approaches, qualifications frameworks, and working internationally.

Many of the organisations have UK, international and bespoke offer portfolios, and it was in the latter category ISQs were more likely to reside. The international portfolios tend to use UK qualifications, removing any UK specific content to make more generic qualifications for wider markets. Vendor qualifications were discussed but tend to be incorporated into the awarding organisation's own offer e.g. Microsoft certificates, as a selling point and therefore do not meet the definition to be a stand-alone ISQ.

All the awarding organisations explained that the majority of the ISQs originate in the UK at the request of multinational clients, for use globally, and are developed through a process of using UK standards (international where available) and sector consultation. Bespoke qualifications are often developed with international knowledge experts who are members of the profession or organisation the qualification is being developed for. The knowledge experts provide the experience of daily practice and associated required knowledge, and the awarding organisations convert this into standards (if there are no existing standards), learning outcomes and final qualifications.

One awarding organisation had an additional offer, they also credit rate others' qualifications. Credit rating supports the development of career pathways and is used to gain recognition on the SCQF in particular within the UK. It is the smallest area of international work for this awarding organisation, and represents a one-time transaction without the need to be an approved delivery centre.



**Table 1: Awarding Organisation Interviews: Key points**

ISQ DEFINITION	ISQ EXAMPLES	UNIQUE SELLING POINT	WHO & WHERE?	VALUE OF RECOGNITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Awarding Organisations in the sector were unfamiliar with the definition</li> <li>o Awarding Organisations generally understood and agreed with the definition on further discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o All Awarding Organisations believed they offer ISQs in line with the definition but when further questioned in some instances it became clear that these did not match the definition</li> <li>o AOs offer a range of international qualifications, customised awards, diplomas and credit rating programmes in topics including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Business Admin</li> <li>o Health and social care</li> <li>o Hospitality</li> <li>o Customer service</li> <li>o First aid</li> <li>o Event management</li> <li>o Construction</li> <li>o Security</li> <li>o Travel</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o ISQs are adaptable to an international market and provide an ease of mobility for people</li> <li>o ISQs are attractive to niche specialisms but generally yield a smaller number of learners</li> <li>o ISQs cab potentially be used as a commercial sales initiative</li> </ul> <p>ISQs allow controlled development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Brand control</li> <li>o Developed through employer focus groups</li> <li>o Developed using or creating international standards</li> <li>o Developed through international networks of experts</li> </ul>	<p>Who uses ISQs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Large retail multinational organisations</li> <li>o Global travel operators</li> </ul> <p>Where are these ISQs used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o UK</li> <li>o Middle East</li> <li>o South East Asia</li> <li>o Australia</li> <li>o USA</li> <li>o Canada</li> <li>o India</li> <li>o Pakistan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o ISQs ideally need to integrate with the NQF to be assured of quality but it is difficult with different processes in each nation</li> <li>o Meeting the quality and contextual needs of the NQFs is expensive and time consuming</li> <li>o Fear of duplication with national qualifications and across NQFs</li> <li>o Need further clarity on how widely ISQs are being used internationally to be able to make business case for recognition</li> </ul>

**Similar selling points of ISQs:**

Latvian Study findings: National experts, certified representatives of qualification designer, designer of qualification award ISQs for use in professional development and progression, promoting competitiveness; continuing education in other country; a quality brand with **sectoral** acceptance using common global standards with unified assessment.

**EXISTING EVIDENTIAL SUPPORT BASE**

**Similar Impetus placed on NQF recognition:**

3s Study findings; Portugal: In 2014, ANQEP conceived a methodology for the design of qualifications based on learning outcomes for levels 1-5 of the NQF and EQF. The qualifications integrated in the NCQ (National Catalogue of Qualifications, including the international qualifications) will be gradually organised in learning outcomes.

**Similar Impetus placed on NQF recognition:**

UNESCO findings, 2015 learning outcomes study: Important distinction is the different purposes of tools for recognition; regional conventions, qualifications frameworks or others which become outdated with new developments. NQFs only in place for 20 years are already criticized for not keeping up with new developments such as international qualifications. Of importance is the potential convergence of recognition conventions and qualifications frameworks such as the relationship between the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the EOF, as well as the **Arusha** Recognition Convention and the SADC RQF.

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

### 5.4 Findings of the qualitative data: Employers

Discussions and face-to-face meetings were held with four employers representing admin and support services, health, hospitality and ICT. Engineering perspectives were gained through professional associations as seen further in the report. This group were not aware of the ISQ definition, and as the group furthest outside of the qualifications arena in terms of common language and understanding of differing systems, required longer discussions to understand how ISQs may relate to them.

When the wider definition was used, which incorporates in-house learning programmes, competency frameworks and international standards, employers were able to relate more to their own operations.

Additional data sets were sought to try and investigate the potential 'hidden' ISQs which may be used without employers necessarily realising their learning meets this definition. Whilst some interesting information is available, and given below, this should be viewed with the caveat that it is assumed ISQs may form part of the data but the proportion of this is unknown.

Research started with a review of Eurostat<sup>7</sup> data files. The area of most interest was the Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) which collects information on enterprises' investment in the continuing vocational training of their staff. Continuing vocational training (CVT) is training measures or activities which have as their primary objectives the acquisition of new competences or the development and improvement of existing ones and which must be financed at least partly by the enterprises for their persons employed who either have a working contract or who benefit directly from their work for the enterprise such as unpaid family workers and casual workers. Persons employed holding an apprenticeship or training contract are not to be taken into consideration for CVT. The training measures or activities must be planned and must be organised or supported with the specific goal of learning. Random learning and initial vocational training (IVT) are explicitly excluded. CVT measures and activities cover both CVT courses and other forms of CVT. For more information on this analysis, and the potential for ISQs to be within this definition please refer to Appendix 6.

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<sup>7</sup><http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/education-and-training/data/database>

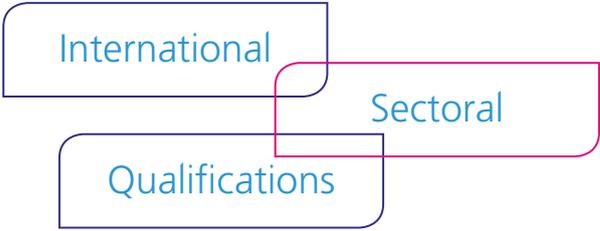


Table 2: Employer Interviews: Key points

ISQ DEFINITION	ISQ EXAMPLES	UNIQUE SELLING POINT	WHO & WHERE:	VALUE OF RECOGNITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most of the employers had never heard of the definition before but could understand it once discussed and explored further to make sense to their context</li> <li>The employers expressed the need for further competence based assessment to test the skills of potential staff which could perhaps be added to the definition. The variety of quality assurance and learning outcomes approach makes some ISQs more valuable than others</li> <li>Again issues arose where a course, such as consultancy training, would fit the ISQ definition except that the origin in the UK and used globally. The same courses are offered in Singapore and the Americas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Google</li> <li>Microsoft</li> <li>CIMA</li> <li>IPA professional quals</li> <li>Econsultancy digital training</li> <li>Hilton Staff worldwide; 100s of online programmes and workshops through Hilton University</li> <li>Java</li> <li>Asides from the known brands listed above, and those ISQs being developed in house there was no knowledge as to how they are being created externally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The main ISQs are recognised by industry and tailored to industry specific needs</li> <li>In some cases, the ISQs are mandatory for learning and development within brand guidelines</li> <li>ISQs offer strong employability skills, especially for young people</li> <li>ISQs assist with movement of workers</li> <li>ISQs can be flexible for use within a global network</li> <li>Fun and educational</li> </ul>	<p>Who is using ISQs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The audience for this group was more inclined to be school leavers or graduates arriving with ISQs except in one case where the employer provides their ISQs only to employed staff</li> </ul> <p>Where are these ISQs used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There was more of a sense of global reach and worldwide 'ownership' of the ISQs from these stakeholders with none listing a known country of origin though most assuming either the UK or USA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value lies in wider recognition, not the costly and timely process of individual national recognition</li> <li>The majority of employers would support EQF links as can be done once, and add to staff recognition and talent management processes. NQFs are too varied and numerous to be able to make as strong a business case for recognition</li> </ul>
<b>EXISTING EVIDENTIAL SUPPORT BASE</b>				
<p><b>Similar findings of benefits/USP:</b></p> <p><b>Latvian Study findings:</b></p> <p>ISQs show learners have measured and appropriate knowledge and skills corresponding to a certain standard and the latest trends. This is particularly appreciated by employers abroad, as well as by international corporations which enter the labour market...these factors ensure career development and mobility opportunities to the holder of international qualifications.</p>	<p><b>Similar benefits to EQF/wide recognition and USP:</b></p> <p><b>CEDEFOP 2012 findings:</b></p> <p>Individuals need to be able to use their qualifications in more than one country, and employers need to be able to judge the level of skills and competences held by potential employees. This trend is particularly visible in sectors like ICT and transport where international organisations, sectoral bodies as well as multinational companies already play a key role in defining and awarding qualifications and thus, in setting requirements for skills and competences.</p>	<p><b>Similar issues expressed regarding quality:</b></p> <p><b>UNESCO findings, 2015 learning outcomes study:</b></p> <p>Another future possibility that has relevance for the proposed world reference levels is the increasing number of widely recognized certificates and diplomas that are being awarded at international level, outside the jurisdiction of public authorities. These non-state qualifications are awarded by a range of bodies, organizations and multinational companies, representing a wide variety of stakeholders and interests. There are two issues to be aware of: transparency and quality assurance of provision.</p>		

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

### 5.5 Findings of the qualitative data: Professional Associations

As with the employer group, ISQs became of more relevance to the professional associations when considering international standards and international competency frameworks. As with the awarding organisations, any courses or qualifications they deliver, award or recognise tend to be their own, which are often recognised on the national qualification frameworks, or are UK originating often using UK standards. Most professional associations hold lists of comparable international qualifications and degrees, but these are for recognised, national authority approved qualifications gained around the world, rather than ISQs.

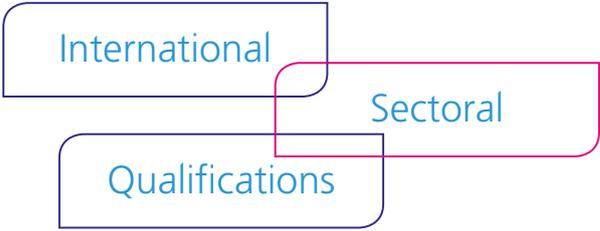
Several of the professional associations working in the key 5 sectors selected for this study are heavily regulated. This is especially true within the health and social work sector, with the Health and Care Professionals Council informing the study that:

'The HCPC currently approve programmes in the 16 professions which we regulate as well as a number of post-registration areas. We currently regulate the following professions: arts therapists, biomedical scientists, chiropodists / podiatrists, clinical scientists, dietitians, hearing aid dispensers, occupational therapists, operating department practitioners, orthoptists, paramedics, physiotherapists, practitioner psychologists, prosthetists / orthotists, radiographers, social workers in England and speech and language therapists.

The programmes on the register meet our Standards of Education and Training (SETs) and individuals who successfully complete one of these programmes meet the proficiency standards for the profession or post registration area that the programme is concerned with.

In March 2008 the HCPC's Education and Training Committee (ETC) was advised that, as a matter of law, the HCPC is not permitted to approve programmes (including franchised and collaborative programmes) which are delivered outside of the UK by a non-UK education provider. International Sectoral Qualifications are based on standards developed by an international sectoral organisation or an international company and we do not regulate these programmes.'

The following table explores some of the main themes raised by professional associations, and supportive evidential information from European and International studies.



**Table 3: Professional Associations Interviews: Key points**

ISQ DEFINITION	ISQ EXAMPLES	UNIQUE SELLING POINT	WHO & WHERE	VALUE OF RECOGNITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The definition was understood by all professional associations but not commonly used term in the industry</li> <li>Many professional associations across the research study discounted the ISQ definition as something that they would not recognise for memberships, or accreditation of prior learning, within their associations. Many UK associations rely on or require degrees or equivalent registered, controlled and recognised (by national authorities) qualifications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-house, customised training in specific development areas within marketing SFIA+ ICT global competency framework</li> <li>One professional association for Science does not deliver ISQs themselves but recognised them and is aware that some of the individual disciplines of Engineering offer these</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ISQs provide internationally comparability of learning and skill</li> <li>ISQs are bespoke and specialised for industry</li> <li>ISQs provide controlled development:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporation and development of international standards</li> <li>Building international expert networks to create globally competitive ISQ offers</li> <li>Clear use of learning outcomes and assessment process to guarantee quality</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Who is using ISQs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of UK employers</li> <li>A range of UK members to the professional associations (covering marketing, science and engineering and ICT)</li> <li>Multinational digital services providers</li> <li>Students</li> <li>Computing and network service providers</li> <li>Multinational health, hygiene and well-being product developers</li> <li>Global engineering and construction company, and power equipment supplier</li> </ul> <p>Where are these ISQs used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Global reach with key market areas identified as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Europe</li> <li>USA</li> <li>Middle East</li> <li>UK</li> <li>Sri Lanka</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One Association felt in the UK that currently there are more barriers than benefits to NQF recognition</li> <li>Barriers include level of bureaucracy without a clear standardized process. Business case judgement based on time, cost and market needs</li> <li>Bureaucracy in the UK includes the need to report learner data by nation where all internal systems are UK-wide and global; this adds more time/workload to recognition</li> <li>As market leaders, do not need the 'brand' of the NQFs to further offer</li> <li>Where NQFs are of benefit is giving access to the development of national sectoral progressions</li> </ul>
<b>EXISTING EVIDENTIAL SUPPORT BASE</b>				
<p><b>Supports formal arrangements more likely:</b></p> <p><b>CEDEFOP 2012 findings:</b></p> <p>It should be noted that use of qualifications to regulate access to and practise of occupations and tasks can take many forms. While some sectors, like transport, may operate based on formal agreements between national authorities, other and less formal arrangements may be used, for example linking certificates to membership of professional associations.</p>		<p><b>UNESCO findings- 2015 learning outcomes study:</b></p> <p>In reviewing the functions and rationales of different types of qualifications frameworks at national and transnational levels the study found currency/value depends on the extent of regulatory compliance required; the level of buy-in from key players (such as industry, learning institutions and professional associations); the perceived or real value to the broad population. The level of trust between member countries; quality assurance systems; mutually agreed sectoral priorities.</p>		
<p><b>Supports formal arrangements more likely:</b></p> <p><b>Similarly highlights Importance of quality and trust:</b></p>		<p><b>Similar finding of focus on degrees:</b></p> <p><b>ILO findings, 2010 Global NQF development study:</b></p> <p>In the development of the Malaysian Qualification Framework, which includes consideration for international qualifications, it was noted that: professional associations seem to be the main stakeholders. This is a problem for the skills sector, as well as for technical vocational education and training, as many if not most professional associations only recognize degrees.</p> <p>This suggests as in the UK degrees are widely understood and accepted in social dialogue stakeholders, but risk missing key skills, knowledge and competences gained</p>		

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

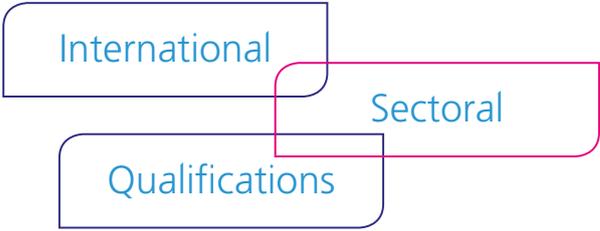
### 5.6 Findings of the qualitative data: Recruiters

Recruitment agencies can provide a bridge of understanding between the qualifications sector and the labour market. For this study 13 recruitment organisations were approached, with only two who agreed to full discussions for the qualitative review. This low response rate could perhaps be partly attributed to the summer holiday season falling within the study timescales, and reflects the overall difficulty in finding respondents engaged with ISQs in the UK.

To support the analysis completed in the table below, further data sets were sought. The CEDEFOP Skills Panorama Analytical Highlights<sup>8</sup> by sector proved particularly useful in showing skills drivers which reflect the discussions held not only with recruiters but also employers, professional associations and sectoral bodies. This information, collated with other relevant findings, can be found in Annex 2.

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<sup>8</sup> [http://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/analytical-highlights?f\[0\]=field\\_sectors%3A88](http://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/analytical-highlights?f[0]=field_sectors%3A88)



**Table 4: Recruiters Interviews: Key points**

ISQ DEFINITION	ISQ EXAMPLES	UNIQUE SELLING POINT	WHO & WHERE?	VALUE OF RECOGNITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The recruiters interviewed had never heard of the definition before but could understand it once discussed and explored further to make sense to their context</li> <li>After hearing the description, the recruitment agencies did know some ISQs are recognised within their industries (Admin &amp; Support Services mainly) but stated they didn't have in-depth knowledge of them or promote ISQs internally for recruitment purposes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Microsoft</li> <li>Stateless qualifications recognised on the Irish Qualifications Framework (therefore not meeting the definition of ISQ as not formally recognised)</li> <li>ACCA</li> <li>Recruitment and Employment Confederation accreditations</li> <li>ECDL</li> <li>CIM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ISQs are more focused and specialised/vocational</li> <li>ISQs promote mobility</li> <li>ISQs ensure operational use of vendor technologies e.g. Microsoft systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who uses ISQs?</li> <li>Clients from the following fields will specifically request for candidates with ISQs:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ICT</li> <li>Finance</li> <li>Engineering</li> <li>Legal</li> <li>Multinational technology and communications providers</li> </ul> </li> <li>Where are these ISQs used?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UK, Republic of Ireland, across Europe</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No strong feelings from those interviewed towards recognition. As long as the employing client values and recognises ISQs, and requests certain learning and qualifications, this is the main driver</li> </ul>
<p><b>HIGHLIGHTING RECRUITERS NEED COMPARABLE MODELS TO ENGAGE WITH ISQS:</b></p>				
<p><b>Latvian Study findings:</b></p> <p>The representatives of Sectoral Expert Councils emphasise the significance of international qualifications when aligning the sector with definite stages of qualification; thus, ensuring opportunity to have a qualitative comparison of personnel's knowledge, skills and competences, which is especially valuable for recruiters.</p>	<p><b>EXISTING EVIDENTIAL SUPPORT BASE</b></p> <p>Supports that recruiter engagement depends on employers' economic culture:</p> <p><b>CEDEFOP 2012 findings:</b></p> <p>An interesting consideration [in financial services] referring to the need for transparency arising from the survey by the European sectoral social dialogue is emergence of employment profiles: recruitment is increasingly standardised in terms of the level of training required. Social partners underlined one of the first routes is definition of criteria allowing for clear and precise equivalences to be established for competences and qualifications; to achieve European certification across economic cultures.</p>			
<p><b>Similar finding in ISQs as promoting mobility:</b></p> <p><b>UNESCO findings, 2015 learning outcomes study:</b></p> <p>In a review of changing qualification policies and practices in Europe, CEDEFOP (2010b, p. 19) concludes that 'generally, the role of qualifications in supporting international mobility has strengthened'. The authors also point to the limitation of qualification as a signal or currency. The authors advocate the concept of 'representation', which is considered as more comprehensive because 'it allows the user to build a picture of their capabilities and a recruiter to be more specific about what is sought in a candidate'.</p>				

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

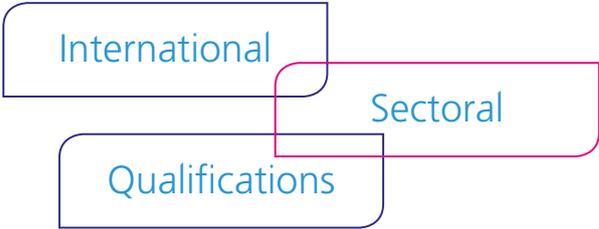
### 5.7 Findings of the qualitative data: Sectoral Bodies

The development of national qualifications frameworks in different countries around the world is where some sectoral bodies are seeing, and participating in, the development and use of ISQs. UK bodies however are often commissioned by international governments, departments and institutions, so again whilst meeting many aspects of the ISQ definition, the origins of both the ISQs and standards used, and formal recognition is less easy to classify with certainty.

One of the two sectoral bodies interviewed stated that use of ISQs is very important to their employer base which consists of multinational organisations. This Sector Skills Council saw ISQs as particularly valuable in supporting employer-led Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). They also advised that private sector clients use their International Academy, especially for infrastructure and economic development projects using development funds such as the World Bank. The Sector Skills Council provides the base curriculum and supports contextualization to individual nation's regulation and cultural needs. Again as a UK originating offer which may have national recognition in the home nation this would miss the ISQ definition. It does however exemplify by broadening the definition the different types of activities which could be captured, and provide lessons learnt to improve UK ISQ developments.

Table 5: Sectoral Bodies Interviews: Key points

ISQ DEFINITION	ISQ EXAMPLES	UNIQUE SELLING POINT	WHO & WHERE:	VALUE OF RECOGNITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both Bodies have a clear understanding of the definition and believe they work with ISQs widely</li> <li>Professional standards are of more interest as seen as coming directly from employers not from governments. This can differ according to context. International employers prefer behavioural expectations to be laid out rather than just competency and learning outcomes</li> <li>With the ISQ definition being read differently by the range of stakeholders there is an issue with understanding the range of ISQs available, assessment issues in the learning and recognition of the learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WorldHost: a suite of customer service training programmes that covers all the essentials of service – from making a good first impression through to creating an outstanding experience to customers with disabilities, welcoming customers from different cultures, to driving sales through service and more. Not greatly used currently but available online, and can accredit Training Providers to allow worldwide delivery by negotiating licenses</li> <li>Standards</li> <li>Competency frameworks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ISQs offer flexibility and sectoral contextualisation</li> <li>ISQs support employer-led TVET</li> </ul>	<p>Who is using ISQs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of ISQs is very important to travel &amp; tourism employers; many being multi-national hospitality organisations and travel operators</li> <li>Employers who require skills in visual merchandising, health and safety, communications, customer care</li> <li>Industries such as nuclear are known to have transparent and recognizable courses that are portable across the industry</li> </ul> <p>Where are these ISQs used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panama</li> <li>Belize</li> <li>Western Balkan</li> <li>India</li> <li>Pakistan</li> <li>Uzbekistan</li> <li>Jordan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many international employers will try to contextualize to own needs, sometimes to their national framework if funding can be accessed by doing so. Few countries will use UK products in-situ, they must be contextualized to local needs</li> <li>Need to consider other elements not just recognition, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entry level</li> <li>Timeframes</li> <li>Expectation on exit from the ISQ e.g. able to complete more functions? Gain license to practice?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Similar process and need for trust:</b></p> <p>35 Study findings: In Slovakia qualifications are routinely identified and written by Sector Councils. In the case of ISQs the dialogue between the qualification provider and National Qualification System is established directly. This work is ongoing, with concerns primarily on the levels compatibility of ISQs and NQF/EQF. When the trust is established, providers of ISQs will proceed the work on NQF/NQF with Sector Councils.</p>				
<p><b>EXISTING EVIDENTIAL SUPPORT BASE</b></p> <p>Similar views on value of recognition: Latvian Study 2014 findings: Proposed by: education centres, formal education institutions, Sectoral Expert Councils. To initiate a dialogue with state authorities to promote cooperation between non-formal and formal ISQs to the NQF; this could be undertaken by HEIs, education centres and/or sectoral associations through the implementation of projects. To include study subjects/courses that meet the requirements of ISQ designer in education programmes.</p>				
<p><b>Similar focus on standards and recognition:</b></p> <p>CEDEFOP 2012 study: For ISQs operating outside national borders and awarded outside the remit of national authorities, particular challenges exist: they must signal their profile and level precisely across national and sectoral borders; demonstrate assessment procedures are reliable and valid; be based on standards, in effect requiring initial development and continuous review by active stakeholders; formal recognition can draw various sources of legitimacy.</p>				



## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

### 5.8 Supporting Findings by Sector: Areas of ISQ Growth

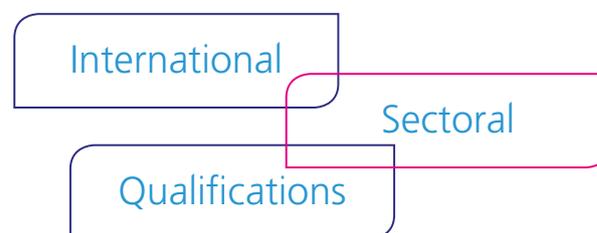
In order to understand drivers and trends that currently impact, or are likely to impact, the 5 key UK economic sectors in the future regarding cross-border skills needs, further research was completed. This prioritised information suggesting potential growth of ISQs in the UK.

The general conclusions of this additional research are listed below, for the detailed reviews and sources of data please refer to Annex 2:

- Administration and support services; three sub-occupations of finance, administration, and sales, marketing and public relations professionals are anticipated to grow with globalisation and e-commerce creating new markets. Programmes offered by private providers, such as CIW Internet Business Associate Certification, are expected to expand to continuously upgrade sectoral skills
- Health and social work: personal care workers are among the top 10 growth occupations across Europe. Technological expertise in health technologies and communications skills will be needed, and soft skills such as brokerage skills, and multicultural diversity awareness offer opportunities for ISQ development
- Hospitality: the types of training traditionally dominating Hospitality in the UK naturally lend themselves to use of existing and new ISQs. This includes on the job training, training towards formal/recognised qualifications, training based on personal development needs, short courses, company-wide training, accredited learning, continuing professional development
- ICT: as continuous vocational education is indispensable for career progression in this sector, there are several professional certifications delivered through private providers and academic institutions. The e-skills QUALITY<sup>9</sup> study show that certification has become essential for ICT practitioners across all backgrounds, with approximately half of them holding at least one certification
- Science, production and engineering: technological and environmental drivers are changing the skills required by science and engineering associates in some cases. Combining technical skillsets with the potential to harness technology is increasingly important; skills such as innovation, communication, collaboration, cross-cultural skills. Again areas unlikely to be heavily regulated and therefore open to development of ISQs.

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<sup>9</sup>European Commission 'Towards a European Quality label for ICT industry training and certification'



## 5.9 Text mining across UK, European and International data

Text mining was conducted to help identify any key themes between the UK ISQ study findings, and European and International studies on ISQs as well as the wider educational and training field. Key words or phrases were identified during the UK study throughout the data collection phase, and selected based on reoccurrence. These were:

- Mobility
- Stakeholders
- Global coverage
- Labour market
- International standards
- Contextualise/contextualize
- Standard
- Competence/competency
- Skill

The use of these key words or phrases was then measured against 7 reports<sup>10</sup>. These reports were selected to provide a good cross-reference around the world as well as a selection of ISQ specific relevant topics such as recognition of learning outcomes and international standards. The results were as follows:

Key word or phrase	No. of mentions	% of overall searches
<b>Skill</b>	1853	47
<b>Competence or competency</b>	746	19
<b>Standard</b>	712	18
<b>Labour market</b>	329	8
<b>Stakeholder</b>	144	4
<b>Mobility</b>	103	3
<b>International standards</b>	36	0.9
<b>Global coverage</b>	7	0.2
<b>Contextualise or contextualize</b>	5	0.1

<sup>10</sup> ICF, Danish Technological Institute, Technopolis Group, 35 report one Survey on national procedures for linking ISQ 2015; International Qualifications in Latvia 2014; Cedefop International Qualifications 2012; A New Skills Agenda for Europe: Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness (SWD (2016) 195); The implementation and impact of national qualifications frameworks: report of a study in 16 countries / Stephanie Allais; International Labour Office, Skills and Employability Department. - Geneva: ILO, 2010; Level-setting and recognition of learning outcomes: The use of level descriptors in the twenty-first century: James Keevy and Borhene Chakroun: UNESCO 2015; OECD (2015), Education at a Glance 2015: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing.

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

The findings begin to suggest some interesting trends which may be explored further outside of this study. Both mobility and contextualise were often mentioned by UK stakeholders in formal data collection and informal discussions yet neither rated highly across the wider spectrum. This could be because different terminology is used to mean the same thing. Stakeholder as a common term is not surprising though the variety of definitions can be extensive, so this may be a misleading finding.

However, the top three key words claimed 84% of the overall mentions which perhaps show a slight change in terminology of the ISQ definition would help gain better understanding and awareness amongst stakeholders including in education, training, lifelong learning and labour markets. As noted in the UNESCO study; *'The prominence of the term 'skill' in international education and training discourse reflects trends in linking education and training systems with the labour market, and the policy focus on employability. It is increasingly becoming a persistent theme of the international discourse on the development agenda, and the central place of youth employment, formulated as 'skills for work and life' (UN, 2013; UNESCOUNICEF, 2013; UNESCO, 2014a).*<sup>11</sup>

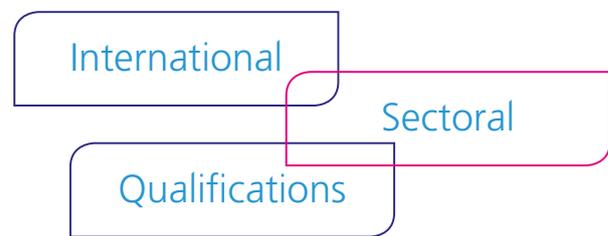
From the start of this report, and the research activities behind it, the current ISQ definition has proved problematic within UK operations. Further testing of potential alternatives that would have more meaning, and more accurately reflect the use of ISQs in the UK could be beneficial in both highlighting these kinds of qualifications, and the areas of good practice/sectoral integration within the UK labour market.

The incorporation or change of terminology to include the terms 'skill' and 'competence' would help clarify the meaning and mirror the language used across other areas of policy. The originating state is also a key differentiator within the UK; many ISQs are written in the UK for use worldwide, many written or commissioned by multi-national organisations based in the UK, and meet the definition but for this small element. Whilst this will not be the case for many nations who import the majority of their qualifications, for the UK as a leader in qualification development it is a vital stumbling block.

The definition of recognition is also an area for review, especially in the UK context. With the 2020 directive to recognise informal, non-formal and lifelong learning in national frameworks the potential for 'stateless' qualifications to exist will shrink considerably, as they will be recognised somewhere in the world. This is echoed by conversations with Awarding Organisations who feel the globalised nature of both labour markets, and education and training markets, requires updated categorisation/definition.

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<sup>11</sup> UNESCO Level-setting and recognition of learning outcomes © UNESCO 2015



As part of this process it may be helpful to refer to other studies and initiatives including; *'The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed by world leaders at the United Nations Summit in New York in 2015. Education is a cornerstone of the sustainable development agenda, and the education-related goal aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030. The goal is composed of ten targets that, together, represent an ambitious commitment to develop better skills for better lives.'*<sup>12</sup>

## 5.10 International perspectives

This study has researched the use of ISQs in the UK, who is using them, why, what are the benefits of formal recognition, and how well the current ISQ definition matches the UK education and training landscape.

Given that one of the main components of ISQs is that they are 'imported' into the country, it is important to reflect on potential plans and/or drivers which international stakeholders may use to access the UK market. The following section looks into this through the exploration of two key reports.

### **Level-setting and recognition of learning outcomes: The use of level descriptors in the twenty-first century: UNESCO 2015:**

The chapter dedicated to International qualifications states:

Another future possibility that has relevance for the proposed world reference levels is the increasing number of widely recognized certificates and diplomas that are being awarded at international level, outside the jurisdiction of public authorities. These non-state qualifications are awarded by a range of bodies, organizations and multinational companies, representing a wide variety of stakeholders and interests.

Future work lies at the crossroads of transparency and quality. Overall relevance of international qualifications requires that they are trusted by potential users. This can only be achieved by systematically creating an overview of what exists and emerges, and by systematically addressing the need for accountability and openness regarding the process leading to a particular qualification...

<sup>12</sup> OECD (2015), Education at a Glance 2015: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2015-en>

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

There is a significant risk that international qualifications will also have an impact on national qualifications and devalue the entire system. This is probably also one of the main reasons that some countries are reluctant to recognize international qualifications. In some instances, providers of international qualifications are required to meet all the national requirements that must be met by local providers (usually offering their courses through conventional methods). In other instances, 'free zones' are created where international qualifications can be offered with minimal national interference. Both models have their weaknesses and strengths, and more will have to be done in future to ensure that risks are mitigated.

Another useful consideration to mitigate the risks associated with international qualifications is the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)/ International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) 17024 conformity assessment standard.

This section from the UNESCO study would suggest a commonality with the findings in this UK study, that the wider definition around sector frameworks, moving into competency frameworks, at a transnational level are more likely to be where successful ISQs are found. It can be inferred from the text that the UK is one of many nations in which formal recognition via a national authority is favoured through conventional methods.

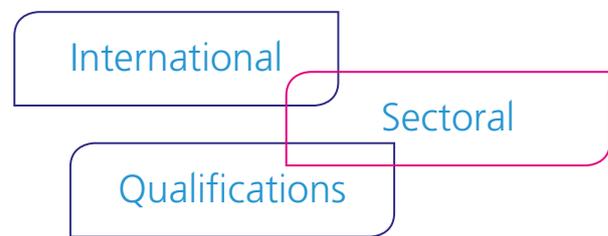
### **The implementation and impact of national qualifications frameworks: report of a study in 16 countries; International Labour Office, 2010**

International recognition and labour mobility:

A major reason for introducing qualifications frameworks is countries' attempts to relate to international systems, and to participate within what are described as globalized labour markets (although of course the latter notion is highly contested from various perspectives in the literature of political economy and economics).

This becomes a self-perpetuating policy cycle: as more countries have developed frameworks, and as regional frameworks such as the EQF have come into existence, policy makers seem to feel under increasing pressure to have a framework in order for their national qualifications to fit in internationally. Even the 'early starters' had a strong sense that a qualifications framework will make it easier to indicate its equivalence to international qualifications where this was required.

All European countries in the study are attempting to fit their qualifications to the EQF, and a national framework is seen as a key step in this process. Many non-European countries are also hoping to align their systems with the EQF; Chile and Tunisia stand out here. A less explicitly mentioned issue, but one which nonetheless appears in some of the studies, particularly Australia, Malaysia, and New Zealand, is the desire to earn foreign currency by attracting foreign students (who in most countries pay much higher fees than local students).



International benchmarking is seen as an important part of this process. The notion of a nationally accepted framework is in many cases linked to other aims discussed below, such as improving transparency, the creation of a set of national standards (as in Bangladesh, Botswana, Lithuania, Russia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, and Turkey), or standardizing the use of academic load or credits in defining qualifications (as in Malaysia). In the attempt to resolve these and other issues, qualifications frameworks may become part of the regulatory frameworks that increasingly control movements of individuals.

Whilst the ILO study is now 6 years old and subject to some changes in the countries mentioned it provides an interesting perspective. One purpose of the UK study was to examine the benefits and barriers to formal recognition of ISQs on to the UK NQFs. In general, most of the ISQs initially discussed with stakeholders were either; a) in the frameworks following standard procedures; or b) were based on recognised, existing qualifications but tailored for international markets. The ILO's findings that national qualifications frameworks as a 'passport' for comparability, and the assumption of nations that they needed to embed such a framework seems to be reflected now. In the feedback gained, recognition on the UK national frameworks was seen as part of the 'sales pitch', added value and the 'gold standard' expected by clients both in the UK and globally.

The large multinationals who engaged with this study, in general are not against the principle of recognition, more against the bureaucracy of doing so on two different UK systems or 28 EU national systems. They often use their own standards of practice and monitor their learners' achievements and progression with set learning objectives and assessment protocols. For these larger organisations EQF recognition is viewed positively with one interviewee explaining the EQF appears to be a strong solution to setting a standardized approach across many countries, and that even outside the EU, for instance in the United Arab Emirates, if clients see a SCQF level or EQF level they know how that relates to their own systems and are more quickly able to identify what needs to take place to incorporate programmes into their learning offers.

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

### 6. Case studies

#### Meeting global marketing needs at the Chartered Institute of Marketing



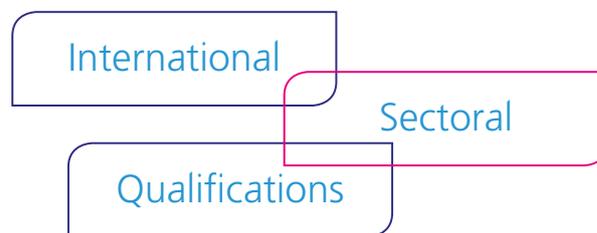
The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) is the world's leading professional marketing body. CIM provides marketing qualifications, training and resources.

The CIM offers both training courses and qualifications which meet the ISQs definition to 99 countries around the world with the UK and Sri Lanka being two of their largest markets. The CIM explained predominantly they are exporters of qualifications as a recognised brand in marketing known to use the UK 'gold standard' approach to learning outcomes and assessment.

Within the ISQ definition, CIM is an awarding body for qualifications which are offered globally via 160 deliverers; half in the UK, half located throughout the world. CIM works with the European Marketing Confederation to assess comparability between CIM offers to professional qualifications across Europe. Higher Education Institutions are increasingly incorporating CIM ISQs into their degree offers to improve employment opportunities for students.

Additionally, CIM provides industry training through workshops, virtual learning spaces and academy models. Multinational companies will choose a specific element of marketing, e.g. branding, and ask CIM to deliver a syllabus matching their business needs and strategies. Commonly, this is used to upskill existing staff as part of the organisation's continuing professional development offer. Others commission a 3-year programme of learning with new starters joining each year and progressing up the levels. Overall, CIM ISQs are popular with clients because they adapt to clients' timescales, budgets, specific topic needs and offer the best-fit, trusted learning for business needs.

All CIM qualification and training products are mapped to the CIM Professional Marketing Competencies which have been developed in consultation with business.



## City & Guilds working with Worldchefs on global skills recognition



Dora Timar, Head of International Recognitions, at the awarding organisation City & Guilds, explains that they offer a range of products and services which would fit the description of International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs). These would typically fall into two categories: international qualifications and bespoke products and services.

International qualifications are mainly used to support portability and skills mobility between countries and regions, by applying a common set of standards and assessments. She explains that many of these qualifications are an adaption of a UK-based provision,

created with product experts from an international network, as added value to national systems. She adds that the distinction between 'UK' and 'non-UK' or 'stateless' qualifications is increasingly difficult to make as sectors and industries become more globalised.

City & Guilds bespoke products and services are typically used by large, often multinational, corporates or organisations who have their own standards, operating procedures and/or quality assurance systems which they would like to have externally accredited or endorsed.

A current product which closely matches the ISQ definition is the industry certification City & Guilds offers with the World Association of Chefs Societies (Worldchefs). Worldchefs, the network of over 100 chefs associations around the world, has set out to create certification for the culinary industry to raise standards and to encourage the continuous professional development of cooks, chefs and culinary educators. Worldchefs identified City & Guilds as an ideal partner to co-develop the standards and to build a quality assured digital delivery platform. The certification enables the recognition of skills and experience, gained in the industry, against a set of global standards. It is designed to act as a recruitment and training benchmark, supporting the movement of culinary professionals as they progress within their careers, while maintaining consistently high standards.

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

### Hilton University, a global learning platform



With over 100 hotels in the UK, Hilton Worldwide needs to ensure consistency and the achievement of high quality learning for their staff.

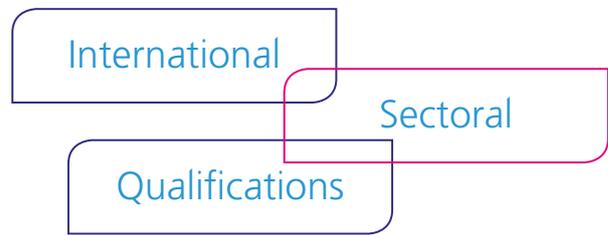
Alison Knight, Head of Talent Management for UK and Ireland, advised that the Hilton learning platform meets the definition of a suite of ISQs by collecting together in-house programmes, a mix of mandatory training and self-driven further learning and development modules.

540 properties in 78 countries across 6 continents use the platform as Hilton takes a global approach, with the range of learning growing organically according to the evolving needs of customers and changes to hospitality practice and policies. Courses are developed by specific in-house teams who will create or adapt learning as required.

Some organisational departments such as HR, IT and Finance may have their own qualifications linked to key industry qualifications such as CIMA. If the in-house teams are unable to develop a programme it will be bought in and tailored to Hilton procedures.

All staff, regardless of level, have designated courses, workshops and webinars to complete through what is collectively known as the Hilton University which encompasses the online platform of programmes as well as residential courses. This approach ensures all learning and development is globally aligned to meet all business needs. The flexibility and level of control on content is vital to this global hospitality brand. To date inclusion of the Hilton University programmes to national qualifications frameworks has not appealed due to the costs and time required, and the potential of 78 different processes to do so. A certificate of achievement and learning history logs are available linked to staffs' unique learner ID, and these serve as recognition of attainment across Hilton, and can be used on staff CVs.

The map provided in Appendix 7 gives an indication of the number of Hilton Worldwide properties within the UK where staff are accessing the Hilton University.



## BCS, leading global competence in IT



BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, offers the Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA), which is the global skills and competency framework that describes IT roles and the skills needed for them. It is supported by industry, and adopted worldwide, underpinning IT talent strategies in over 2,500 organisations across 195 countries.

SFIPlus gives additional information to the framework, and has become the industry's most widely adopted and relevant best practice benchmark in IT skills, training and development. It creates a common language around skills in IT, giving employers and practitioners a framework to align their knowledge, skills and experience as well as plan their learning and development. SFIPlus has been created, reviewed and edited by a team of industry experts ensuring it is accurate, relevant and reflects current best practice. It is aligned to BCS Professional Certifications and membership grades, as well as other industry recognised frameworks including ITIL® and the Government IT competency framework.

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, work with organisations to develop people, forge culture and create IT capabilities fit to not only lead business change but to meet companywide objectives and deliver competitive advantage. Presently examples of customers include, Unilever, Virgin Media, Yodel, Kimberly-Clark, Foster Wheeler. Kimberly-Clark is a multi-national company providing brands that enhance the world population's health, hygiene and well-being. Their IT function is spread across the globe. The organisation has undergone considerable change with mergers and acquisitions. This has provoked a company-wide strategic focus on talent management. Their IT employees needed more transparency of job profiles across the organisation for a clearer understanding of the career opportunities available to them. Kimberly-Clark chose to align the industry standard skills and competency framework, SFIPlus, with their organisation by creating detailed corporate role profiles for their IT staff. SFIPlus appealed to Kimberly-Clark because it is easily customised to meet business requirements. With 800 IT staff worldwide, Kimberly-Clark placed their initial focus on their UK and US teams, starting with a pilot in 2009 involving 30 project managers.

As part of BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT overall offer to the IT sector, SFIPlus which meets part of the current ISQ definition, offers the opportunity for SFIPlus to operate as it was designed to. It is a three-dimensional model, providing clarity around the skills needed to meet business objectives, valued by the sector it serves around the world.

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

### 7. Conclusions

Particular attention was given to both European and International findings and conclusions in this study, as there was no baseline data to measure against. The research provided a detailed cross analysis of existing reports, and global initiatives.

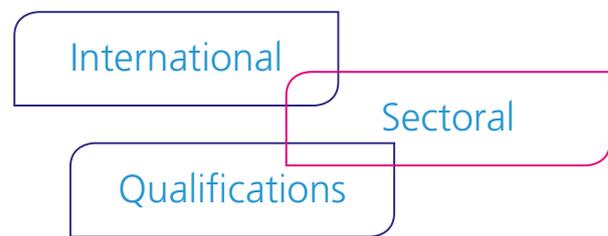
As a prelude to exploring the conclusions for each research objective within the UK study, the headline findings include:

- It was difficult to separate ISQs from National Qualifications Frameworks and adequately cover the 'non-state' qualifications; there is a commercial advantage of recognition on UK Frameworks as a quality stamp; **'exporters of qualifications not importers'**
- The definition is confusing, not well recognised: many take it to include UK-created qualifications which are used in several countries or qualifications written for international audiences using UK standards
- ISQs appear, at this point of the research, to be more established in ICT, finance and engineering as seen in European studies. Inclusion of international competency frameworks or international sectoral qualifications frameworks may help expand this in other sectors, including those sectors outside of the 5 selected for this study
- Multinationals are likely to design and use ISQs but sometimes avoid engagement with national qualifications systems due to cost and time implications, and therefore don't recognise themselves as active participants in ISQs use and development.

#### Conclusions: Objective 1: To what extent ISQs are being used in the UK and whether or not this practice is growing?

In the UK ISQs are most likely to be used in sectors with large multinational organisations as the main employers, who want to keep brand control without the need for individual national contextualisation. This research study has encountered these types of companies predominantly in the hospitality and ICT sectors, though it is relatively safe to assume this is the same in the other sectors considered.

Several UK sectors including Science, Production and Engineering, and Health and Social Work, have a tradition of using and understanding occupational standards or standards of practice and competency frameworks, though historically these have been based on UK national standards. It is likely they would adopt international standards which ISQs are built from if quality requirements can be met, which would require some form of recognition. As heavily regulated sectors in terms of both safety and practice, they are more likely to have legal frameworks for compliance in all their systems including learning and development, as well as recruitment. Currently, these are often met by Higher Education degrees from recognised global institutions. There was one anecdotal example of a university in Wales investigating the possibility of including an international project management ISQ as part of the Engineering degree offer, which would be assessed and certified separately off-site.



This still meets the definition requirements that ISQs are standalone and this kind of offer should be monitored in the future as a potential growing practice.

The Skills Framework for Information Age (SFIA+), International Framework for ICT, and also the European Competency Framework for Digital Skills suggests this sector is the most-ready in the UK for ISQs, supported by the offerings from brand leaders such as Oracle, Microsoft and Google often referred to in the UK as vendor qualifications. However, again issues of quality and transparency are still raised and require further analysis. One employer reported that they would still require a competency test for candidates with some vendor qualifications as their experience had been these can often equate to only watching tutorial videos and completing yes/no questions and they would want more evidence of use and understanding. The same employer also reported that some aspects of vendor qualifications can be tied into sales targets, so an organisation may be operating at a 'gold' standard but cannot progress from 'silver' before selling a set number of the vendors' software packages or tools. Whilst this is anecdotal from one employer, it presents an issue of reliability, of transparency and of trust which may impact the value of ISQs even where they are used regularly.

Though many more potential ISQs exist and are used in the UK as previously mentioned these often miss one point of the current definition and therefore could not be included in this study. At the end of this study, the European Commission 'International (sectoral) qualifications and the EQF' Explanatory note, circulated in November 2016, suggested that the definitions will be reviewed to separate international qualifications which would retain the definition used in this study, from international sectoral qualifications which may change to 'an international qualification relevant to a sector of economic activity developed by an international sectorial organisation or an international company'. This change would more closely represent ISQs in the UK.

### **Conclusions: Objective 2: Who offers these ISQs and why?**

The relatively small sample sizes gained through the different research methodologies makes it slightly more complicated to draw conclusions for this objective. Engagement was difficult as discussed previously, perhaps due to: time of year; Brexit; unawareness of ISQ definition; restrictiveness of the ISQ definition, and/or; ISQs being used in niche areas only. However, some initial conclusions can be captured and potentially explored further in the future, depending on the actions put in place regarding ISQs in the UK.

Professional associations, sectoral bodies, awarding organisations, and employers can all potentially deliver a variant of ISQ within the definition. Higher and Further Education centres were approached, and many did not know the ISQ definition, and on exploring if they offered an ISQ 99% of the time these were incorporated within their own programmes so did not meet the standalone criteria. As mentioned, one university is considering a slightly different model, to give their students a professional certificate to stand alongside their degree, to help improve employability opportunities.

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

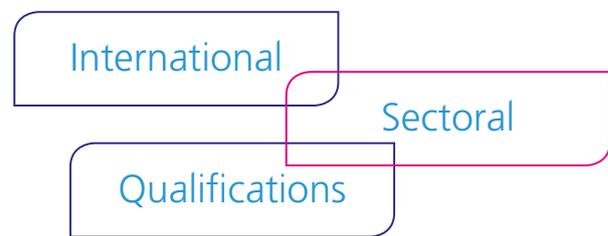
Internet research also suggests that private training providers may deliver ISQs but again mainly opt for versions that are accredited or recognised by national authorities as this is what UK clients expect. Many have gained international approval as deliverers so meet the national delivery through international systems, but will also have gained UK approvals.

The Oracle Academy model is an interesting example, though unlikely to be replicated outside of the large multinationals. This global programme has an average of 1 million students per year through 6,000 educator members, delivering the same courses in each country. For Oracle Academy, this offers the flexibility to build what a global network of academic advisors believes to be the key skills in Java and Databases. The approach can be fun as well as educational, with content written to match the needs of the course whilst offering a pathway to certification. Oracle Academy is based in Scotland but writes the course content for global application. They create modular courses that can fit the needs of multiple countries. Courses are developed in-house using international benchmarks/standards through the larger corporate team as well as using global academic members/advisors to review and improve the content. They aim for mixed and open delivery such as projects, tests, exams, virtual learning, workshops etc.

The Academy itself is part of the corporate social responsibility of Oracle who can invest in such programmes, where smaller organisations will struggle to do so. However, the separation of the Academy from the Oracle University which is a commercial entity selling proprietary software training courses to individuals and institutions, is interesting as technically both provide courses which meet the ISQs definition with the Academy recognising increasing requests for recognition of their courses within national frameworks.

### **Conclusions: Objective 3: Would there be value in formal recognition of these qualifications on all the UK NQFs?**

The simple answer to this is yes. Most respondents who engaged with this study either automatically expected formal recognition, or assumed formal recognition would have been achieved in the originating country. There are a few caveats to this. Most larger organisations would prefer to do the process once, and the most appealing format was to do so through the EQF. Reasons for this are to save time and money, and the benefits include improved staff recognition and recruitment support. Other organisations were concerned about control of the content of the ISQs especially around brand values, and avoiding the need to contextualise learning to each individual nation where they want to implement one global standard of practice. This suggests the EQF or the credit-rating approach of the SCQF may suit these needs. This is supported by the findings of the European Commission 'International (sectoral) qualifications and the EQF' Explanatory note, circulated in November 2016, which described a, 'direct linkage to the EQF is of greatest interest' for similar reasons.



One interesting benefit described by a respondent to NQF recognition is the access this provides to the national sector, and being able to join those at the forefront who are shaping it. This could be explored further in different sectors to see if the same applies, and if so may provide a more enticing offer to NQFs rather than the overarching EQF.

In the recent European Commission ISQ Explanatory note, three potential solutions are identified with some thoughts given to pros and cons to deal with ISQ recognition to the EQF. The second of these, 'a small group of countries (3-6) determining the same EQF level for a particular qualification, which would then be adopted by all other countries. In case of inconsistencies setting up a panel at EU level to resolve the issues and agree on the EQF level' could offer a promising solution for UK organisations.

## Additional Conclusions:

### **The implementation and impact of national qualifications frameworks: report of a study in 16 countries / Stephanie Allais; International Labour Office, 2010**

A note of interest, especially towards objective 3 of the UK study, can be seen below from the aforementioned ILO report. Again, this is with the caveat of the ILO study being 6 years old so more recent figures may be available, however an insight which may resonate with any future research following this UK study:

International recognition and labour mobility: The case studies did not provide clear evidence of improved international recognition or mobility because of the existence of a qualifications framework. This does not mean that no evidence exists in these countries, but that officials interviewed, and official and 101 research documentation which was included in this study did not provide such evidence. Critical readers of earlier drafts of this report were surprised by this and suggested that favourable evidence in this regard should be available in Australia and New Zealand, but researchers in these countries were unable to locate such evidence, despite additional requests and attempts in this regard. The Scottish framework is being aligned to the European Qualifications Framework, and the other European countries are directly basing their frameworks on the European one. Whether this improves mobility and recognition remain to be seen. In Lithuania some experts interviewed were concerned that if the NQF did improve mobility, this could be negative for the country, as it could endanger the national and ethnic identity of Lithuania, and endanger its economic development because more mobile skilled workers will

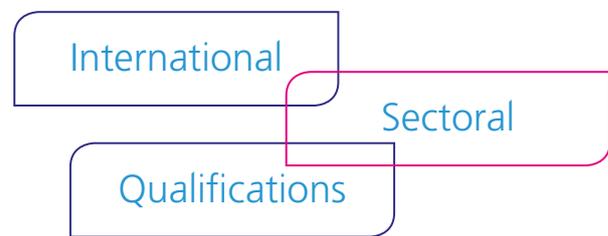
## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

move, thus undermining Lithuania's workforce further. However, a trade unionist representative interviewed had a very different opinion, arguing that increased mobility (via the NQF or the EQF) will help employees improve their socioeconomic status and increase their bargaining power in the field of industrial relations.

### Level-setting and recognition of learning outcomes: The use of level descriptors in the twenty-first century: UNESCO 2015

Another interesting perspective, which adds to the conclusions made regarding objective 1 of this UK study especially the likelihood of ISQ use to grow, and the learning outcomes approach, is:

There has been an increasing recognition of the importance of lifelong learning in the twenty-first century. The difference in the current context, though, is that this recognition of the need for lifelong learning is no longer confined to specific countries, or even regions. At international level, this is illustrated through the shifts from 'Education for All', as adopted at Jomtien in 1990 and reaffirmed at Dakar in 2000, to 'Lifelong Learning for All' (UN, 2013; UNESCO-UNICEF, 2013; UNESCO, 2014a). Increasingly, the right to lifelong learning is recognized in education and labour market policies and regulations (Daelman and Chakroun, forthcoming). Stimulating the shift to learning outcomes-based qualifications is decisive in this context because it allows learning happening in non-formal and informal contexts to be effectively blended into lifelong learning. It is also essential for education systems, in particular TVET, to provide potential for future learning. The knowledge, skills and attitudes required for lifelong learning are evolving. These range from foundation knowledge and skills, such as literacy and numeracy, to more complex skills and attitudes, such as entrepreneurship, problem-solving and learning to learn. At present, the process of setting the post-2015 development agenda has prompted significant reflection and discussions over the kind of education the world needs and wants for the twenty-first century. While increasing access to education is still a major challenge in many countries, improving the quality and relevance of education is now receiving more attention than ever, with due emphasis on the importance of values, attitudes and skills that promote mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. Beyond cognitive knowledge and skills, the international community is urging an education that will help resolve the existing and emerging global challenges menacing our planet, while wisely tapping into the opportunities it provides. In this context, there is growing interest in skills for sustainable development and global citizenship education (GCE), signalling a shift in the role and purpose of education to that of forging more just, peaceful, tolerant and inclusive societies. In this regard the Brundtland report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987, p. 8) provides a useful description of sustainable development: A development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains two key concepts: the concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.



## 8. Annexes and Appendices

This section explores the results of the research conducted in line with the methodology listed above.

### Annex 1: Documents used in literature reviews and highlight of findings

#### **Situational review at the start of the study:**

- Feb 2015: ICF, Danish Technological Institute, Technopolis Group, 3S report one Survey on national procedures for linking ISQ
- 20152015-international-qualifications (UCAS listings)
- AG23\_minutes
- ECVET Mag 19
- EQF referencing process and report
- Employer Skills Surveys 2015 England, Northern Ireland, Scotland
- Global National Qualification Framework Inventory 2013
- International Qualifications (CEDEFOP) 2012
- International Qualifications Latvian report 2014
- International sectoral qualifications and qualifications frameworks questionnaire 2016

#### **Further reviews during course of the study:**

- OECD 2016 trends shaping education
- UKAS Accreditation Agency guidelines on international mechanic/engineer training
- LO Implementation and Impact of NQFs: Report of a study in 16 countries (13 non-EU)
- Job descriptions for key roles listing skills/education required
- UNESCO level setting and recognition of learning outcomes
- Eurostat data Continuing vocation training in enterprises
- ONS data labour force surveys
- Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS) datasets from the UK Data Service
- Skills Panorama: Skills opportunities and challenges factsheets: in each key sector
- CEDEFOP Research Paper no 51 ensuring the quality of certification in vocational education and training
- CEDEFOP Working Paper No 23 qualifications at level 5
- EQF Referencing Process: examples and proposals: project number 147833 LLP-1-2008-1-AT-EQF
- Centre of Strategy and Evaluation Services Mapping tourism education and training Feb 2016

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

- People 1st State of the Nation 2013
- Politecnico di Torino NQF-SQF 1/38 Summary of interim results
- Publicaciones de la Universidad de Deusto Sectoral qualifications frameworks towards a European SQF for creative and performing disciplines and the humanities (includes data on creative ICT roles and training)
- ISQF study preliminary findings
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics data sets and reports e.g. 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all

### Report Highlights to Support UK Study

#### CEDEFOP: International Qualifications 2012

Established six broad differentiating elements for ISQs.

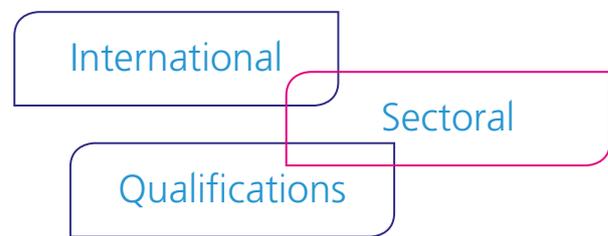
1. Purpose – what is the qualification for?
2. Type – what is the duration of the qualification?
3. Coverage – where can it be used geographically/institutionally?
4. Competent body – which body awards the qualification?
5. Currency – what can the qualification be exchanged for? How is it accepted in different situations?
6. Value – what learning processes are used? What are the quality assurance and assessment standards?

The report recommends looking for the use of ISO17024 for assessment quality within ISQs. It also advised that the term ‘license’ in ISQs often means qualification or certificate and not necessarily a license to practice. The latter tends to require regulatory approval e.g. NQF status. This report also further defines international body as:

- International organisations or authorities
- EU bodies, agencies and foundations e.g. Euro Aviation Safety Agency
- International sector organisations, associations, social partner organisation, federations and institutes
- Multinational companies, networks and associations focusing on professional needs linked to international technologies and markets e.g. USA Corporate Universities, Ernst & Young, and Lufthansa.

From this report the following research suggestions were taken into the UK research study:

- Consider professional associations. Do they offer ISQs? Do they recognise ISQs under their terms of membership?



- Project Management Institute presence in the UK. Accredited by American National Standard Institute against ISO17024 plus registered against ISO9001: 2000 Quality Management
- European Computer Driving License (ECDL) and International Computer Driving License (ICDL) offers in the UK
- CISCO networking academies and learning partners in the UK
- Welding qualification use (EWP/IIW/ECCW) in the UK

### International Qualifications in Latvia 2014

This report provides the questionnaires used for surveys and during workshops. These are very useful measures for benchmarking the UK research study. From this report the following research suggestions have been applied to the UK study:

- Explore the use of the term 'non-state qualifications' in the UK
- Check the laws governing the NQFs to search for ISQ/International Qualification references as different terms may be used by stakeholders due to this
- PRINCE2 delivery and accreditation within the UK
- Adobe, Linux and IBM ISQs in the UK

### Feb 2015: ICF, Danish Technological Institute, Technopolis Group, 3S report one: Survey on national procedures for linking ISQ

As with the Latvian Report above, this 3S report gives the questions used for the online survey which will provide useful benchmarking measures/areas of comparison for this project. It highlights that ISQs are being mapped to the SCQF, complying with credit rating body requirements. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland there is no specific regulation for ISQs so again normal procedures would apply for inclusion to NQFs including compliance with general conditions of recognition. From this report the following research suggestions were applied to the UK study:

- National qualifications based on international standards are not ISQ if they are only delivered in the UK. The delivery and recognition must be in one country or more
- In Scotland the international organisation typically owns the qualification with delivery or credit rating being offered by a national body (SCQF qualifications only). Is this replicated in ISQs outside of the NQFs?

During the course of the study interim findings were circulated for the ongoing 'Study on international sectoral qualifications, frameworks and related initiatives' being conducted by 3s/ICF. These again provide some interesting comparisons and opportunities to spot any emerging themes across Europe.

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

### Annex 2: Supporting Sectoral Research: Highlighting Potential Growth and Use of ISQs

#### **Admin and support services<sup>13</sup>:**

Skills Panorama uses the same definition to describe this sector as used in the UK study: skilled office workers who carry out a broad range of tasks within business, administration, sales and marketing. There are three sub-occupations; finance professionals; administration professionals, and; sales, marketing and public relations professionals.

The qualification mix is projected to remain fairly stable between 2015 and 2025 with three quarters of these professionals holding high level qualifications, and one in four holding medium level. Globalisation and the expansion of e-commerce will create new markets. Professionals, particularly in sales and marketing will need to become familiar with new regulatory frameworks, and strengthen their language and intercultural skills. Supply chain management skills will also be important.

Standard certifications play an important role, for example for accountants: specialist programmes offered by private providers; the Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA) program from ISACA; the CIW Internet Business Associate Certification; the Chartered IT Professional Certification; and for Human Resources Professionals CIPD certification. Beyond certification, this industry should continuously upgrade and expand their skills to cope with change especially in finance services<sup>14</sup> as drivers show the pace of change will result in current skills being outdated within the next 5 years.

#### **Health and social work<sup>15</sup>:**

The definition used is in relation to social care, the UK EQF NCPs team agreed at the start of the study that social work was a wider-used term in the UK but referred to the same area of work; the social care sector can be defined as providing help to 'any person of any age with a social care need, which hampers the person in some of his/her daily activities'<sup>16</sup>

In 2013, an estimated 6 million out of the 22.2 million total EU health and social work workforce were in personal care occupations. The sector has been an important source of job creation over the last 10-15 years. Personal care workers (in health and social care) are among the top 10 growth occupations in Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands, Czech Republic and Hungary<sup>17</sup>.

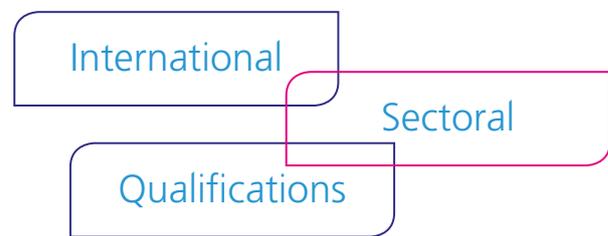
<sup>13</sup> 2016: Business and administration professionals: skills opportunities and challenges | Skills Panorama

<sup>14</sup> Cedefop 2015, Skills, qualifications and jobs in the EU: the making of a perfect match? Evidence from Cedefop's 8/31/2016 European skills and jobs survey. Luxembourg: Publications Office.

<sup>15</sup> 2016: Health professionals: skills opportunities and challenges: Skills Panorama and EU Skills Panorama (2014) Skills for social care Analytical Highlight, prepared by ICF GHK and Cedefop for the European Commission

<sup>16</sup> Eurofound (2006), Employment in social care in Europe

<sup>17</sup> European Commission (2013), European vacancy monitor (Issue number 10)



Whilst the mobility of care professionals can offer a solution to supply side issues, this can simply displace the problem. The sector also requires an increasingly diverse skill set among the workforce. In addition to ‘traditional’ care-related competencies, such as interaction with service users and the ability to deal with physical and mental stress, there is increased focus on: technological expertise – especially related to the growth in health technologies; communications skills (increasingly in a foreign language); other ‘soft’ skills such as brokerage skills, awareness of multicultural diversity and the promotion of human rights; and multi-disciplinary team-working skills. These ‘softer’ skills and non-regulated skills such as technological expertise are areas likely to attract ISQs.

The demand for specialist qualifications in the health sector, especially in new and emerging technologies opens opportunities for education and training providers potentially in the format of ISQs. According to the World Health Organisation, the education of medical students must have a much greater emphasis on providing contextual and integrative competences that can be directly applied to the challenges faced in the profession. Continual identification of key competencies which build throughout a medical career will ensure practitioners keep pace with evolving practices.

### Hospitality<sup>18</sup>:

The European Commission report on tourism education and training divides tourism, referred to as hospitality in this study, into two key areas; Accommodation services, and Travel and Tour Services. The UK stands out as a country with few Accommodation enterprises but many employees relative to its size. This suggests that its Accommodation sector is characterised by larger enterprises, such as hotel groups. The UK, Denmark, Austria, Germany, Luxembourg and France employ many people relative to their size in the Travel Agency and Tour Operator sector. This perhaps reflects the fact that these countries are important sources of “outgoing” tourism. In some countries, notably the UK, Denmark and France, it would seem that the sector is again particularly characterised by large enterprises, since with few enterprises but many employees relative to their size.

Recent research by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) suggests that difficulties in recruitment are hindering the ability of employers to satisfy their need for skills<sup>19</sup>. Based on a survey of senior Human Resource (HR) managers in WTTC member companies in 25 countries, the research found that:

- Recruiting staff has become more difficult in the past two years (62% of companies) and will become more difficult over the next five years (66% of companies). This reflects both strong projected growth in demand for tourism services and weak projected growth in the supply of skills<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> 2016: Hospitality, retail and other services managers: skills opportunities and challenges | Skills Panorama and 2016: EC Report: Mapping and performance check of the supply side of tourism education and training: Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services

<sup>19</sup> World Travel & Tourism Council (2014), Talent Challenges in Travel & Tourism

<sup>20</sup> World Travel & Tourism Council (2014)

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

- Recruitment is particularly difficult amongst higher skilled and more professional roles. Moreover, evidence from the UK suggests that additional recruitment will be particularly needed in management roles that demand a broad range of high level skills critical to business success and profitability<sup>21</sup>

In the UK, the 2013 People 1st State of the Nation reported there were 181,500 individual business sites operating across the hospitality and tourism sector. Restaurants, hotels, and pubs, bars and nightclubs comprise the greatest number of businesses and represent the greater share (70%) of the sector's Gross Value Added. When considering types of training, the report listed<sup>22</sup> the below types which are highly likely to contain ISQs based on the large variety of large multinational organisations operating in the UK:

- On-the-job training (88%)
- Training towards formal/recognised qualifications (38%)
- Training based on personal development needs (36%)
- Short courses/'bite-sized' learning (31%)
- Company-wide training programmes (28%)
- Accredited or 'kite-marked' learning (31%)
- Continuing professional development (18%)
- None of these (9%)

### ICT<sup>23</sup>:

ICT professionals are a high-skilled occupation: in 2015, 7 out of 10 people held high qualifications and about one quarter of them hold medium-level qualifications. ICT professionals' skills are vulnerable to swift and constant technological advancements.

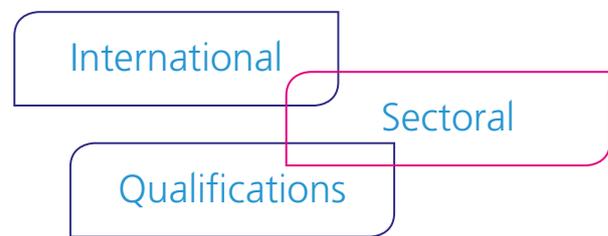
Anecdotal evidence<sup>24</sup> supports that the share of computer science graduates has increased in ICT recruitment over the last decade; yet other graduates, from mathematics, natural sciences, engineering or social sciences that possess the IT skills demanded fill ICT positions that would otherwise remain vacant. As ICT professionals very often come from non-pure IT studies, enriching curricula across specialisation of studies within STEM and other ICT-pertinent skills can support people's transition to ICT professional jobs, regardless of their educational background.

<sup>21</sup> The Future of Travel & Tourism Talent 21 People 1st (2013), State of the Nation Report: An analysis of labour market trends, skills, education and training within the UK hospitality and tourism industries

<sup>22</sup> 2012 People 1st Employer survey

<sup>23</sup> 2016: Information and communication technology professionals: skills opportunities and challenges | Skills Panorama

<sup>24</sup> Hüsing, T, Korte, W, K, & Dashja, E, 2015 Trends and Forecasts for the European ICT Professional and Digital Leadership Labour Markets (2015-2020), viewed 1 June 2016



As continuous vocational education is indispensable for career progression, there are several professional certifications that ICT professionals could pursue through private providers and academic institutions. Certifications are designed to keep the knowledge and skills of the workforce updated. The e-skills QUALITY study<sup>25</sup> shows that certification has become essential for ICT practitioners across all backgrounds. Not surprisingly, about half of them reportedly hold at least one certification<sup>26</sup>.

To promote mobility of ICT professionals across sectors in the economy and/or EU Member States, the European Commission offers a “common European framework for ICT professionals in all industry sectors”. Use of this within the UK would constitute an ISQ in the wider definition.

### Science, production and engineering<sup>27</sup>:

National research in the United Kingdom indicates that the greatest potential for growth in advanced manufacturing is likely to be in aerospace, defence, bio-pharmaceuticals, microelectronics and chemicals and low carbon vehicle technologies, as these are industries where there is a strong research and skills base to build on and where advanced manufacturing can provide employers with a significant competitive advantage<sup>28</sup>.

Employers do, however, experience skills shortages related to increasing specialisation associated with advanced manufacturing. The fairly widespread growth in the number of engineering graduates over the last decade is not necessarily evenly distributed across engineering subjects. For example, in the United Kingdom, from 2003/04 to 2011/12, there has been a substantial rise in the number of graduates in civil engineering, chemical, process and energy engineering, mechanic engineering and, to a lesser extent, aerospace engineering<sup>29</sup>. Over the same period, the number of production and manufacturing engineering graduates has halved, the number of electronic and electrical engineering graduates has fallen by a quarter, and the number of general engineering graduates has also gone down. This focus on degrees suggests a smaller likelihood of ISQs to be found in UK production/ manufacturing industries.

Science and engineering associate professionals require a range of medium- and high-level technical skills related to their specific area, such as: mathematics; chemistry; physics; engineering; technology and design; economics; and architecture. These associate professionals need to be able to understand and assist in applying the principles, techniques and equipment in their specialist area.

<sup>25</sup> European Commission ‘Towards a European Quality label for ICT industry training and certification’, viewed 1 June 2016

<sup>26</sup> Korte, W, B, Hüsing, T, Hendriks, L, & Dirx, J (prepared for the European Commission) 2013, Towards a European Quality label for ICT industry training and certification, viewed 1 June 2016

<sup>27</sup> EU Skills Panorama (2014) Advanced manufacturing Analytical Highlight, prepared by ICF GHK and Cedefop for the European Commission; and EU Skills Panorama (2014) Science and engineering associate professionals Analytical Highlight, prepared by ICF and Cedefop for the European Commission

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.* 18

<sup>29</sup> Engineering UK (2014), The state of engineering

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

Technological and environmental drivers are changing the skills required by science and engineering associate professionals (in some but not all cases). Combining a technical skillset (related to a specific scientific discipline) with the potential to harness technology is increasingly important. As organisational, product and technological developments become increasingly integrated; skills such as innovation, communication, collaboration, adaptability, and social and cross-cultural skills (as well as other '21st Century Skills') are likely to be increasingly valued in science and engineering associate professionals<sup>30 31</sup>.

### Annex 3: Benchmarking, triangulation and quality assurance

The goal of the benchmarking plan was to: provide easier comparison between research already conducted; to ensure strong outcomes using recognised good practice in Latvian Report, and by well-regarded research institute, 3S/ICF; and to track pre-project and post-project understandings levels, showing an increase in understanding the use of ISQs in the UK on completion.

Throughout the lifecycle of the study the data being used, collected and collated was sourced from reliable sources, aggregated in line with best practice, and reviewed regularly with the NCPs of each nation to ensure the right measures were used. Output metrics were established for each benchmarking objectives to monitor developments.

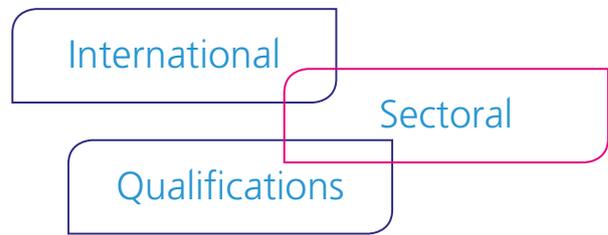
Microsoft packages were used to record and monitor benchmarking to support the data analysis phase. JMP text mining software was used to interrogate the data at three levels: UK, European and International.

The benchmarking was linked to the quality assurance plan. The data collected to develop the benchmarking findings was subjected to a verification process as follows to promote accurate and transparent reporting:

- Data must come from one of the five selected sectors: Science, Production and Engineering, ICT, Health and Social Work, Admin and Support Services and Hospitality;
- Data must come from one of the defined stakeholders: Awarding organisations, sector skills councils, regulators, sector employers, training providers;
- Data must be related to the definition of ISQs used by the EQF sub-group; and
- Data must come from the 4 UK nations; multinationals and qualifications must be based and offered in the UK and at least one other country.

<sup>30</sup> S. Stelten, OECD Education Today (2013), Skills for the digital economy

<sup>31</sup> K. Kärkkäinen et al, OECD Education Working Papers, No. 91 (2013), Sparking innovation in STEM education with technology and collaboration: A case study of the HP catalyst initiative



The benchmarking process was continually evaluated throughout the project to ensure it continued to meet the goals. Questions such as the following were asked:

- Are the metrics being tracked still valuable?
- Has the type of available data changed based on stakeholders, ISQs definition, further studies?
- Is data being received and tracked in a timely way so as to be useful for the project?
- Have the benchmarking needs changed substantively?
- Is the benchmarking tool and information useful, can informed decisions/assumptions be made?
- If the benchmarking plan needs to be changed, who is responsible for approving any changes?

## Appendix 1: Circulation Breakdown by Partner for Research Project Dissemination

Through Twitter, Upskill Enterprise tweeted survey links on 5 occasions with each tweet making over 400 impressions at a rate of 77.2% of total followership of circa 550 followers, and used LinkedIn to make 37 personal messages and a public notice to 350 followers.

NI Business Info put the articles into their newsletter and made a front page banner for their website to promote the survey articles. In August, when this article ran on the website, there were 240,276 visitors to the site.



## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership (SCQFP) promoted the articles on their websites and using social media. Their newsletter has a circulation of 800 subscribers with a link to the first news article and survey in the June Newsletter which had an open rate of 31.4%. The article itself received 16 click-throughs from the newsletter. The SCQFP website had over 34.5K visitors and 88K page views between June and end of August 2016. The first news post on our website 'Help shape the future of stateless qualifications in the UK' had 8 social shares on LinkedIn, 1 Facebook Share and from Google Analytics 45 page views. The second news article on the website '3 minutes to shape the future of stateless qualifications in the UK' had 1 share on LinkedIn and from Google Analytics 9 page views. Posts linking to the news articles on the LinkedIn company page (289 Followers) had 21 click throughs. Twitter was used where SCQFP has 2767 followers, with the ISQ tweet being one of their top ten link clicks for June.

Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB) put the article into one newsletter with a UK circulation of around 1,300 contacts predominantly in the awarding organisation arena.

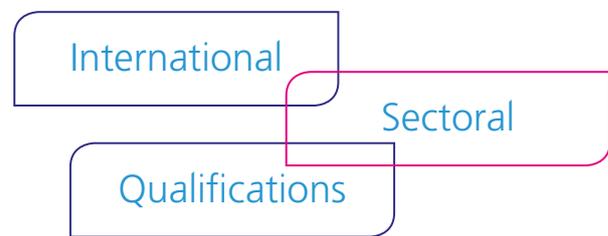
Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) circulated the article to their 5 main member bodies in Higher Education but did not feel it appropriate to send to individual members.

Federation for Industry Skills and Standards (FISSS) agreed to promote the study to their networks. There are 16 Sector Skills Councils and 5 Sector Skills Bodies who work with over 550,000 employers to define skills needs and skills standards in their industry in the UK. In addition there are 19 National Skills Academies. These are employer-led organisations with a leading role in developing the infrastructure needed to deliver specialist skills in individual industries and sectors of the economy.

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) circulated articles via social media and their website. They have a subscriber base of 397 Higher Education and Further Education universities and colleges, with 11,600 followers on Twitter.

Ecorys UK shared the survey through their various web and social media channels including to 5309 newsletter subscribers (with 3094 of those specifically interested in VET), and 5053 Twitter followers. They also sent the survey to the members of their VET sectoral consultative group.

The Engineering Council distributed the article to 37 associated bodies.



## Appendix 2: Examples of Findings from Desk Research

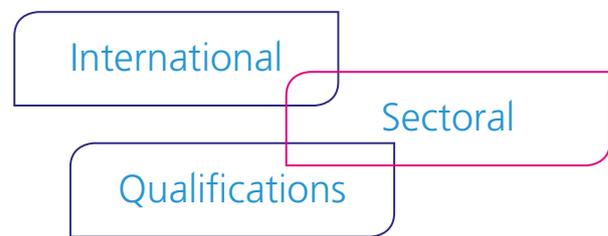
An example of the qualifications found on the NQFs include: Database Design & Programming in SQL Oracle Scotland; Technical Specialist: Accessing Data with Microsoft .NET Framework 4 Microsoft; European Computer Driving License; Certified Event Management Analyst IQN; Diploma in Hospitality Management IQN; Lean RCM Practitioner Engineering Maintenance Systems (EMS) Cognito; Advanced Good Clinical Practice Module ClinTec International; Advanced Professional Certificate in Development Disorders and Special Needs Aegean-Omiros College; Certificate in Coaching Institute of Counselling; International General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety NEBOSH; Level 3 Diploma in Sales and Marketing Purpose ISMM; Level 4 Diploma in Network Security BCS;

Through this initial review of organisations there were several examples across the economic sectors of strong international activity. For instance, the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality has 57 qualifications on the Register of Regulated Qualifications, and is the UK's leading professional awarding body for qualifications in the specialist growing hospitality and tourism sector worldwide. They have accredited colleges worldwide delivering qualifications to let learners progress in Tourism, Travel and Hospitality at Certificate, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Graduate Diploma and Postgraduate Diploma level, will recognition pathways to our qualifications provide appropriate academic preparation for students to apply for entry to final year degree programmes and Masters top up programs. All qualifications are developed in conjunction with the UK Sector Skills Council, People1st, to ensure relevance, value and quality. This approach guarantees that CTH qualifications are valued by employers throughout the world. CTH also has strong links with industry, with effective relationships and high profile endorsements from organisations such as Virgin Atlantic, GTMC, Star Alliance, Marriot Hotels Caribbean, Radisson Edwardian, Sheraton Hotels, Mantis Collection, Adair Leadership, The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and many others. However, as the originators of these qualifications are UK based and have recognised programmes on the RQF this puts CTH outside of the current ISQ definition.

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

### Appendix 3 Search Terms Used in Desk Research

SOC code/general search terms	CEDEFOP 2012 Report terms	3S Report/Latvian Report terms
International marketing qualifications	Project Management Institute qualifications	Non-state qualifications in the UK
Google qualifications UK	American National Standards Institute in UK	PRINCE2 qualifications in the UK
International hospitality qualifications in UK	European computer driving license	PRINCE2 international qualifications in the UK
International hotel manager qualifications in UK	International computer driving license	Adobe qualifications UK
International restaurant qualifications in UK	CISCO networking qualifications in the UK	IBM qualifications UK
International chef qualifications in UK	CISCO learning partners in the UK	LINUX qualifications UK
International accommodation qualifications in UK		
International accounting qualifications in UK		
International business admin qualifications in UK		
International finance qualifications in UK		
International business qualifications in UK*		
International government qualifications in UK		
International book-keepers qualifications in UK		
International records clerk qualifications in UK		
International sales admin qualifications in UK		
International office manager qualifications in UK		
International medical practitioner qualifications in UK		
International social worker qualifications in UK		
International physical science qualifications in UK		
International scientific technician qualifications in UK		
International engineering technician qualifications in UK		
International production technician qualifications in UK		
International programmers qualifications in UK		
International software development qualifications in UK		
International ICT technician qualifications in UK		



## Appendix 4: Detailed Internet Research Results by Sector

### Administration and support services

- Squared Online is the result of 172 hours of workshops with over 300 industry gurus, helping us provide an education programme that is routed in real industry need. We're the product of a partnership between Google and Home Learning College, the UK's largest distance learning provider for professional qualifications. Endorsed by the IPA and IAB and accredited by CPD, Squared Online is designed to equip the leaders of the future with the tools and mind-set to embrace emerging opportunities in digital marketing<sup>32</sup>
- Association of International Accountants - AIA works in the public interest, ensuring that our members are appropriately regulated for the work that they carry out. AIA is a Prescribed Body under the Companies (Auditing and Accounting) Act 2003 in the Republic of Ireland and also have supervisory status for our members under the UK Money Laundering Regulations 2007. AIA is also recognised by the Commonwealth as an Accredited Organisation. The AIA professional qualification is currently recognised in over 30 countries worldwide<sup>33</sup>
- CIMA is the world's largest and leading professional body of management accountants. Our mission is to help people and businesses to succeed in the public and private sectors. They have more than 229,000 members and students in 176 countries. They work at the heart of business in industry, commerce and not for profit organisations with strong relationships with employers, and sponsor leading research<sup>34</sup>
- BPP Professional Education: is one of Europe's leading specialist providers of professional education, delivering a range of industry-leading Professional Qualifications, Professional Apprenticeships, Professional Development programmes and Learning Media. They offer professionals opportunities to progress through a variety of qualifications in accountancy, tax, insolvency and banking and finance. 16 UK learning centres and 4 European centres<sup>35</sup>
- IFS Learning: The Certificate in International Trade and Finance (CITF®) is a QCF Level 3 qualification that has been designed to enable trade, export and commodity executives to gain a thorough understanding of key procedures, practices and legislation in trade finance on an international level. CITF® combines the acquisition of technical knowledge with the skills to apply that knowledge to real situations. As an International Trade Course it has been developed in consultation with trade finance experts from across the world<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.wearesquared.com/digital-marketing-course>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.aiaworldwide.com/qualifications>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.cimaglobal.com/About-us/2015-syllabus/>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.bpp.com/professional-education>

<sup>36</sup> [http://www.ifslearning.ac.uk/specialist-qualifications/trade-finance/certificate-in-international-trade-and-finance-\(citf\)](http://www.ifslearning.ac.uk/specialist-qualifications/trade-finance/certificate-in-international-trade-and-finance-(citf))

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

### Science, production and engineering

- The Science Council is a membership organisation for professional bodies and learned societies across the disciplines of science. They bring together a range of disciplines and sectors to reflect the multi-disciplinary practice of science. They also set the standards for professional registration for practising scientists and science technicians, independent of scientific discipline. Professional bodies within their membership are licensed to award members who meet these standards<sup>37</sup>
- IST has, since the early 1950s, taken an active role in the education, training and qualification of science laboratory technicians. This involvement extends throughout the United Kingdom and overseas and covers schools, colleges, universities, medical research centres and all sectors of industry<sup>38</sup>
- The Engineering Council recognises Dublin Accord, Sydney Accord and Washington Accord<sup>39</sup> qualifications as providing knowledge and understanding that underpins the competence requirements for registration as Engineering Technician, Incorporated Engineer and Chartered Engineer respectively. The Engineering Council recognises degrees with the EUR-ACE® Bachelor label as fully meeting the education requirements for Incorporated Engineer registration. A EUR-ACE® labelled integrated Master's degree or a combination of a EUR-ACE® labelled Bachelor's and Master's degree are recognised as meeting the education requirements for Chartered Engineer registration. The Engineering Council is the UK regulatory body for the engineering profession, holding the national registers of 222,000 Engineering Technicians (EngTech), Incorporated Engineers (IEng), Chartered Engineers (CEng) and Information and Communications Technology Technicians (ICTTech).

In addition, the Engineering Council sets and maintains the internationally recognised standards of professional competence and ethics that govern the award and retention of these titles. This ensures that employers, government and wider society - both in the UK and overseas - can have confidence in the knowledge, experience and commitment of professionally registered engineers and technicians<sup>40</sup>

The Engineering Council recommended individual consultation with the following bodies, and circulated a newsletter article informing them of the research study and surveys:

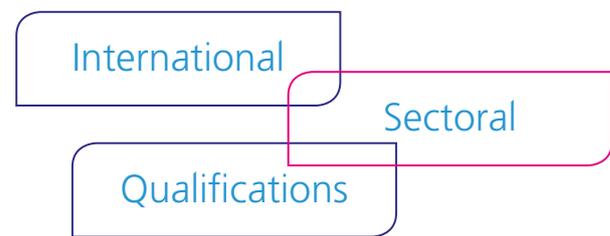
- o BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT
- o Energy Institute (EI)
- o Institution of Agricultural Engineers (IAgrE)
- o Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)
- o Institution of Chemical Engineers (ICChemE)
- o Institute of Cast Metals Engineers (ICME)

<sup>37</sup> <http://sciencecouncil.org/about-us/>

<sup>38</sup> <http://istonline.org.uk/>

<sup>39</sup> Students starting Washington Accord programmes from July 2015 onwards will be required to demonstrate learning to European Master's level when applying for Chartered Engineer registration.

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.engc.org.uk/>



- o Institution of Engineering Designers (IED)
- o Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)
- o Institute of Healthcare Engineering and Estate Management (IHEEM)
- o Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology (IMarEST)
- o Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE)
- o Institute of Measurement and Control (InstMC)
- o Institution of Royal Engineers (InstRE)
- o Institute of Acoustics (IOA)
- o Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining (IOM3)
- o Institute of Physics (IOP)
- o Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (IPEM)
- o Institution of Railway Signal Engineers (IRSE)
- o Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE)
- o Institute of Water
- o Nuclear Institute (NI)
- o Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS)
- o Royal Institution of Naval Architects (RINA)
- o Society of Environmental Engineers (SEE)
- o The Society of Operations Engineers (SOE)
- o The Welding Institute (TWI)

### Health and social work

- FAIMER seeks to improve the health of communities by improving health professions education. By creating educational opportunities, conducting research, and providing data resources, it serves international communities of educators, researchers, regulators, and policy makers - each a potential change agent for better health care. Through worldwide activities, FAIMER combines its own expertise with that of local experts to create meaningful and sustained improvements in the systems that produce health care providers and deliver health care<sup>41</sup>
- WFME is the global organization concerned with education and training of medical doctors. WFME's mission is to strive for better health care for all mankind; WFME's primary objective is to enhance the quality of medical education worldwide, with promotion of the highest scientific and ethical standards in medical education. This objective is met through the development of standards in medical education, by the promotion of accreditation of medical schools, with the development of databases on medical education, through projects on the future of medicine and medical education, and through other publications and partnerships<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> [www.faimer.org](http://www.faimer.org)

<sup>42</sup> [www.wfme.org](http://www.wfme.org)

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

- HCPC are a regulator, and were set up to protect the public. To do this, they keep a register of health and care professionals who meet their standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health. They currently regulate the following professions: arts therapists, biomedical scientists, chiropodists / podiatrists, clinical scientists, dietitians, hearing aid dispensers, occupational therapists, operating department practitioners, orthoptists, paramedics, physiotherapists, practitioner psychologists, prosthetists / orthotists, radiographers, social workers in England and Wales, speech and language therapists<sup>43</sup>
- NISCC is helping to raise standards in the social care workforce by registering social care workers in Northern Ireland; setting standards for their conduct and practice and supporting their professional development<sup>44</sup>
- The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is the regulator for the social service workforce in Scotland. Our work means the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled and confident workforce. We protect the public by registering social service workers, setting standards for their practice, conduct, training and education and by supporting their professional development<sup>45</sup>

### ICT

- Google Analytics Individual Qualification (IQ) – a course and exam with Google certificate to show proficiency in use of Google Analytics. Completed online<sup>46</sup>
- Computeach were founded in 1964 and have since helped over 100,000 students to get the IT qualifications that they desired. They are the longest standing IT trainer in the UK. Each course paths deliver multiple industry accredited qualifications that are highly valued by employers. They were the first UK distance learning provider to gain Microsoft Gold Partner for Learning status and are accredited by CompTIA and CIW, amongst others.
- BCS Chartered Institute of IT is the global awarding body for IT. They have IT user qualifications from digital literacy to advanced office applications as well Professional certification as they set the standards across the industry. They offer over 60 internationally recognised certificates covering 11 core subject areas including: software testing; IT service management; PRINCE2; Green IT<sup>47</sup>

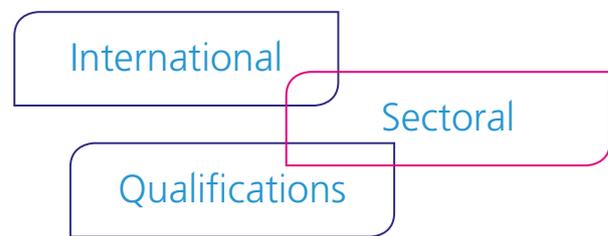
<sup>43</sup> <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutus/contactus/>

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.niscc.info/about>

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.sssc.uk.com/>

<sup>46</sup> <https://support.google.com/partners/answer/6089738?hl=en-GB>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.bcs.org/category/5677>



## Hospitality

- Institute of Hospitality offer management qualifications for the International Hospitality and Tourism Industries, from developing a unique set of international Management Qualifications which provide industry focused training in management and leadership for the Hospitality and Tourism industries. The International Management Qualifications Brochure provides an overview of all the awards and explains the progression routes for the International Management Qualifications and the framework for the individual units.
- City & Guilds offer 5 international hospitality qualifications; Food preparation and culinary arts, accommodation operations & services, reception operation services, food and beverage services, and barista skills<sup>48</sup>
- Chef Academy is a prestigious school that is internationally recognised. The Academy was founded in Italy with a school opened shortly afterwards in London. Graduating at Chef Academy gives access to the professional world of cooking. Our school is also internationally recognized by ASIC (Accreditation Service for International Colleges)<sup>49</sup>
- Ashburton Chef Academy: All their courses are developed in-house and are unique to the Ashburton Chefs Academy. They incorporate the highest level, accredited chef qualifications within our courses that are recognised (through NEBOSH) and valued by employers around the world and our graduates have an excellent record of securing positions in the top kitchens in the UK<sup>50</sup>
- Le Cordon Bleu London: maintains a presence of 50 schools in 20 countries, training over 20,000 students of more than 70 different nationalities every year<sup>51</sup>

These examples demonstrate that the majority of programmes are accredited and recognised by some regulatory or national authority. Cordon Bleu advised that their qualifications do not fit into the ISQ model as they offer internal awards and NCFE validation in the UK. The Le Cordon Bleu London qualification itself is internal and not accredited internationally, only through local agreements with universities and awarding bodies.

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.cityandguilds.com/qualifications-and-apprenticeships/hospitality-and-catering#fil=international>

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.chefacademyoflondon.com/en/cooking-courses.html>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.ashburtonchefsacademy.co.uk/>

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.cordonbleu.edu/programmes/en>

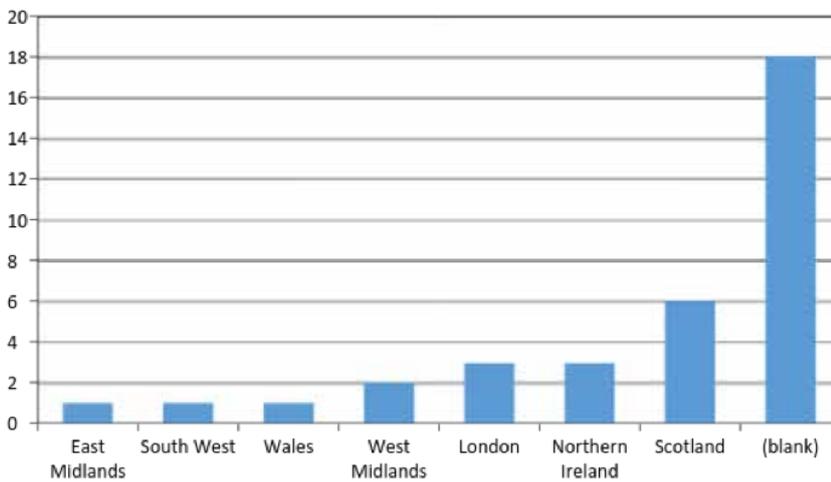
## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

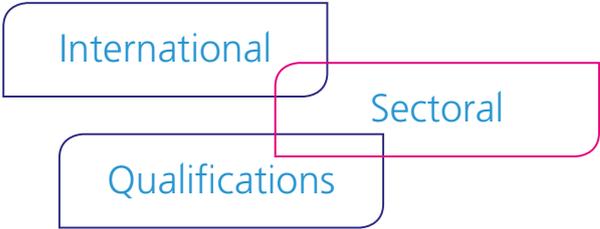
### Appendix 5: Detailed Internet Research Results by Sector

#### Further Data from Online Consultations

This study sought to ensure a geographical balance when the consultation was deployed. The target population reflected a national spread.

**Figure 1:** Share of Respondents by Regional Base





**Figure 2:** Spatial Distribution of Respondents



During the consultation, respondents were asked to provide information about their geographical location. Roughly half of all the respondents supplied this information. Figure 2 shows the spread of respondents by their corresponding regional bases. The results indicate a north south divide with majority of the respondents based in the northern part of the country. This could be attributed to a greater awareness and understanding in the north due to differing NQF approaches. This should however be interpreted with some caution as 51% of respondents failed to indicate their geographical location.

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

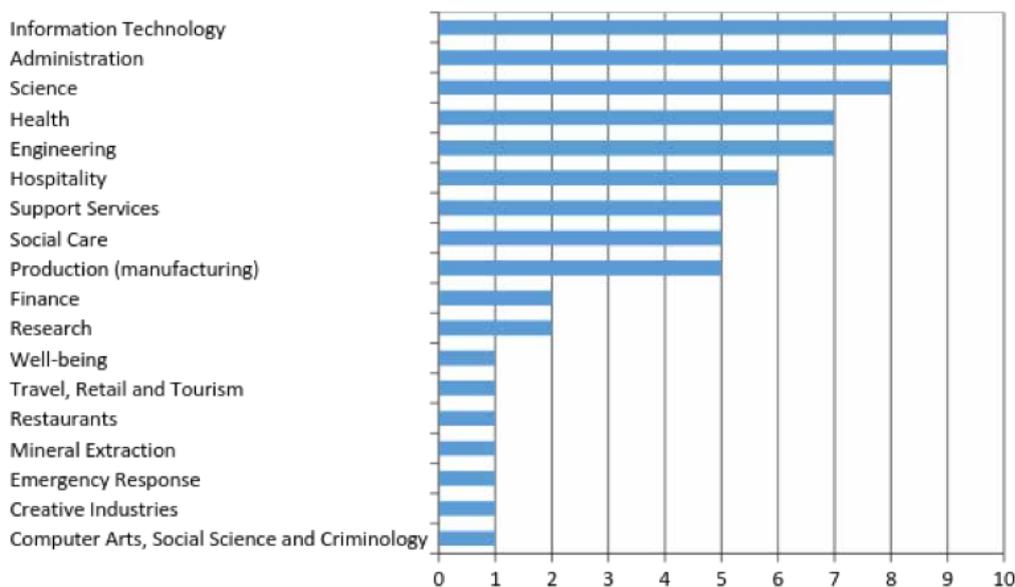
### Organisational Size

The majority of employers (17%) describe themselves as large employers with more than 250 employees. Only 8% of respondents indicated that they are medium sized employers with staff numbers ranging from 51 to 250 people. A substantial share (14%) are small employers with a workforce of less than 50 employees.

### Nature of Establishment Activities

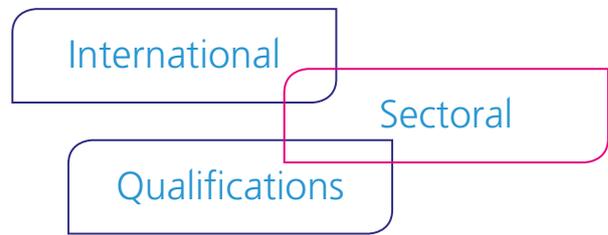
Stakeholders within the ISQ footprint provide services in at least 14 main sectors across the UK. The density of stakeholders by the main activities of the strands are illustrated in Figure 3. Three sectors (Information Technology, Administration and Science and Technology) dominate the activities of establishments.

**Figure 3:** Density of respondents by sectors (respondents could select more than one than one category)



**Table 1:** Types of Organisations

Types of Organisation Represented and (respondent number)	Upskill Survey	ICF Survey
International education centre (1)	2.9%	1.0%
International institutions (1)	2.9%	1.0%
Membership based body that has national sectoral bodies (2)	5.7%	29.0%
Independent assessment organisation (2)	5.7%	
Sectoral representative organisation (2)	5.7%	
Membership based body that has individual professionals and companies (3)	8.6%	20.0%
Non-profit entity (3)	8.6%	5.0%



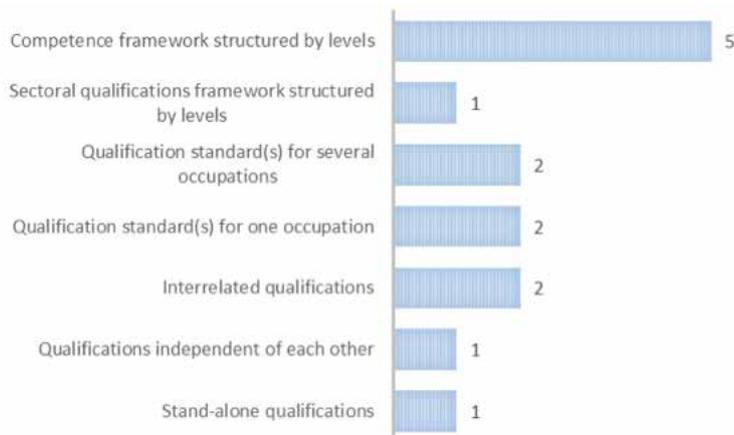
The consultation participants were asked to indicate the types of organisations they represent. Results presented in Table 1 suggest that majority of the organisations are non-profits and membership based bodies catering for individuals.

The findings were compared with the pattern of respondents from a similar survey conducted by ICF international in 2015. There is a mismatch in the density of the types of organisations represented in both consultations. In the case of the ICF survey, membership based bodies with national sectoral units have the largest share of representation.

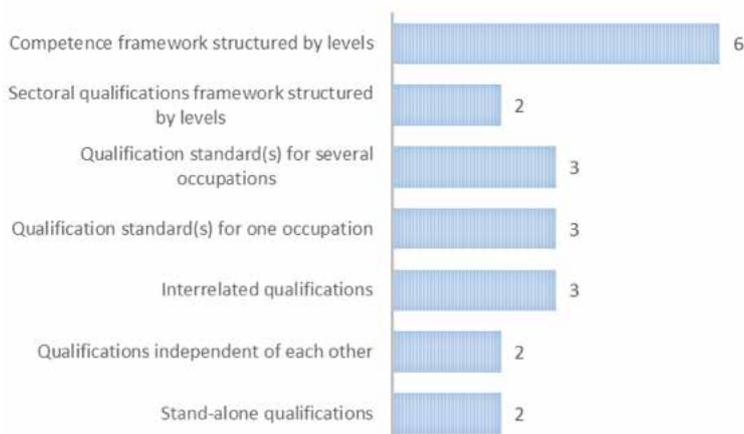
### Design, Delivery, Awarding and Recognition of Specific ISQs

This study sought to profile respondents by the rates at which they design, deliver, award, recognise and maintain the use of specific ISQs. Analysis of the responses show marked variations.

**Figure 4:** Design of Specific ISQs (respondents could select one than one category)

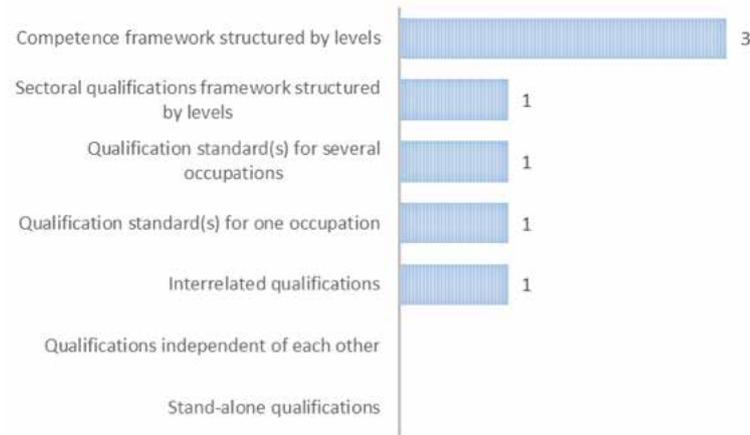


**Figure 5:** Delivery of Specific ISQs (respondents could select one than one category)

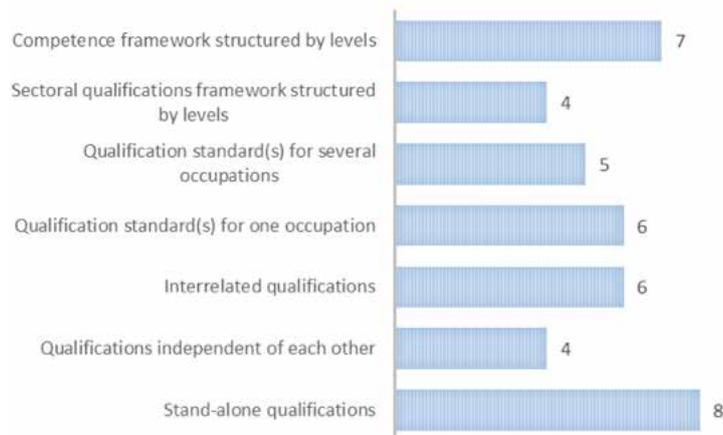


## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

**Figure 6:** Awarding of Specific ISQs (respondents could select one than one category)



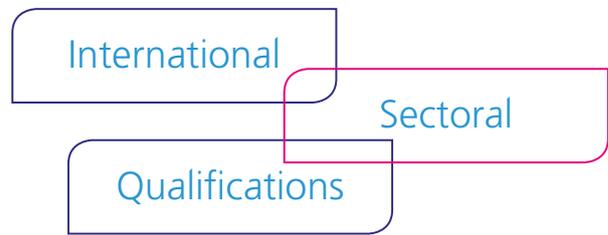
**Figure 7:** Recognition of Specific ISQs (respondents could select one than one category)



The most significant fluctuations can be observed within the recognition theme. The maintenance theme reflected no variation because of small response rate. It was therefore excluded from the analysis.

### Countries Where ISQs are Offered

Participants also specified the countries where their organisations offer ISQs. Just 3% stated that they offer ISQs in the United Kingdom. Around 11% of participants offer ISQs on a world-wide basis. Other key markets included the Middle East and South East Asia.



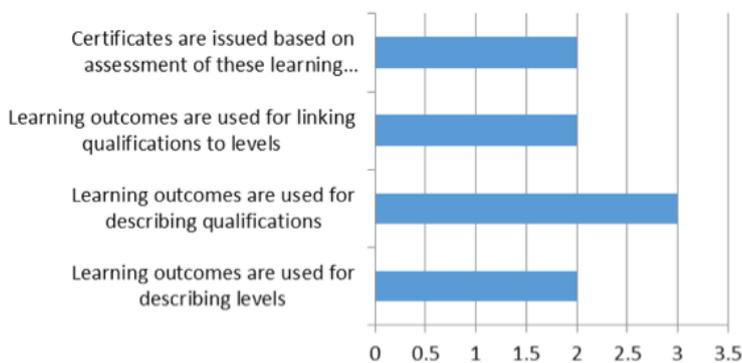
### Awareness of Other International Qualifications

Participants in the UK consultation were asked about their level of awareness of other internationally used qualifications, standards or frameworks that are awarded or maintained by other organisations in their economic sector of activity. The response rate for this question was particularly low. Only four participants responded, with three indicating that they were unsure and one respondent indicating lack of awareness.

### Use of Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements that describe significant and essential learning that learners have achieved, and can reliably demonstrate at the end of a course or program. In other words, learning outcomes identify what the learner will know and be able to do by the end of a course or program. Specifically, learning outcomes are the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that learners take with them from a learning experience.

**Figure 8:** How Learning Outcomes are used



From Figure 10, it is evident that the majority of organisations use learning outcomes for describing qualifications. The ICF 2015 study provides a Pan-European perspective on the use of learning outcomes. Results from the ICF study indicate that learning outcomes are commonly used for ISQs and standards as the basis for course objectives and assessment. They are less commonly used for explicit level descriptors in frameworks. However, learning outcomes of a qualification are nevertheless used to decide on which level a qualification should be placed.

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

### Quality Assurance

Participants of the UK study were asked if there is an explicit quality assurance approach for ISQs in their sector. Again, responses to this question was quite sparse. Only four participants responded. Two respondents indicated that they were not sure if there is a quality assurance process in place in their organisation. Another respondent was positive about the existence of a quality assurance process whilst the fourth responded noted that the process is implicit.

In comparison, the ICF study showed that most organisations have an explicit quality assurance procedure. Some organisations have extensive systems in place, which include reviewing course content, inspecting provider premises and examining the experience and skills of teachers. Other organisations employ less detailed approaches.

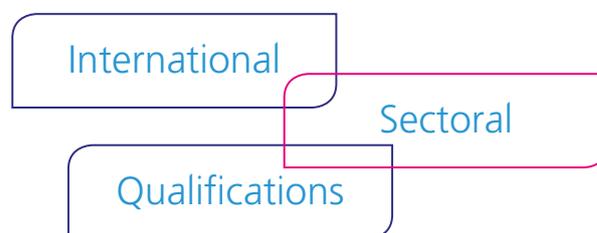
## Appendix 6: Further Data on CVT in the UK

CVT courses are typically clearly separated from the active workplace (learning takes place in locations specially assigned for learning like a class room or training centre). They show a high degree of organisation (time, space and content) by a trainer or a training institution. The content is designed for a group of learners (e.g. a curriculum exists). Two distinct types of CVT courses are identified: internal and external CVT courses.

Other forms of CVT are typically connected to the active work and the active workplace. These are often characterised by a degree of self-organisation (time, space and content) by the individual learner or by a group of learners. The content is often tailored according to the learners' individual needs in the workplace. The following types of other forms of CVT are identified:

- planned training through guided-on-the-job training
- planned training through job rotation, exchanges, secondments or study visits
- planned training through participation (instruction received) in conferences, workshops, trade fairs and lectures
- planned training through participation in learning or quality circles
- planned training through self-directed learning/e-learning

The following data was taken to explore the key areas which may include ISQs. For this research study the information regarding the UK is of the most interesting, however comparisons have been included to help frame this data including EU averages, Germany (who have a live ISQ study in 2016) and Latvia (following their 2014 report). Additional information was available on Eurostat regarding construction and real estate activities, but both of these areas are outside the scope of this study.



Percentage of employees (all enterprises) participating in CVT courses 2010 (last updated 25.09.2014)<sup>52</sup>:

Country	Total	Industry (except construction)	Wholesale/Retail (incl. hospitality)	ICT
<b>EU average estimates</b>	38	38	36	55
<b>Germany</b>	39	43	37	52
<b>Latvia</b>	24	23	22	46
<b>UK</b>	31	24	31	43

Participants in other form of CVT as a percentage of employees in all enterprises, by type of training (last updated 22.07.2014): Two of the five types of training were selected for inclusion here as the most likely to contain ISQs based on employer conversations and feedback.

Guided on-the-job training<sup>53</sup>:

Country	Total	Industry (except construction)	Wholesale/Retail (incl. hospitality)	ICT
<b>EU average</b>	20	22	19	26
<b>Germany</b>	28	37	23	37
<b>Latvia</b>	21	26	18	19
<b>UK</b>	30	30	29	33

Guided on-the-job training<sup>54</sup>:

Country	Total	Industry (except construction)	Wholesale/Retail (incl. hospitality)	ICT
<b>EU average estimates</b>	8	4	8	26
<b>Germany</b>	11	5	12	23
<b>Latvia</b>	2	0	2	11
<b>UK</b>	9	5	11	27

As mentioned above this data can only be indicative and requires further exploration, but it does demonstrate that activities are happening across sectors in different delivery styles which may include ISQs. From here more in-depth UK data was sought, and gained through Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in regards to CVT<sup>55</sup>. In particular, the table on the next page shows the varied ways in which UK employers offer training. Whilst again we cannot be sure how many of these would include ISQs that meet the current definition, and do not run into the issues of originating country or level of national authority recognition, it provides further insight to the wider landscape in which ISQs are likely to operate within.

<sup>52</sup> Percentage of employees (all enterprises) participating in CVT courses, by NACE Rev. 2 [trng\_cvts13]  
Last update: 25-09-2014 [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=trng\\_cvts13&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=trng_cvts13&lang=en)

<sup>53</sup> Click here for Eurostat table CVT courses; guided on the job training

<sup>54</sup> Click here for Eurostat table CVT courses; self-directed learning

<sup>55</sup> BIS Research Paper Number 102: CVTS4: Feb 2013: [click here for link to report](#)

## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

**Table 2:** Training processes, plans and policies by whether training is provided *Figures in bold highlight higher propensity for formal planning amongst those providing both internal/external CVT courses.*

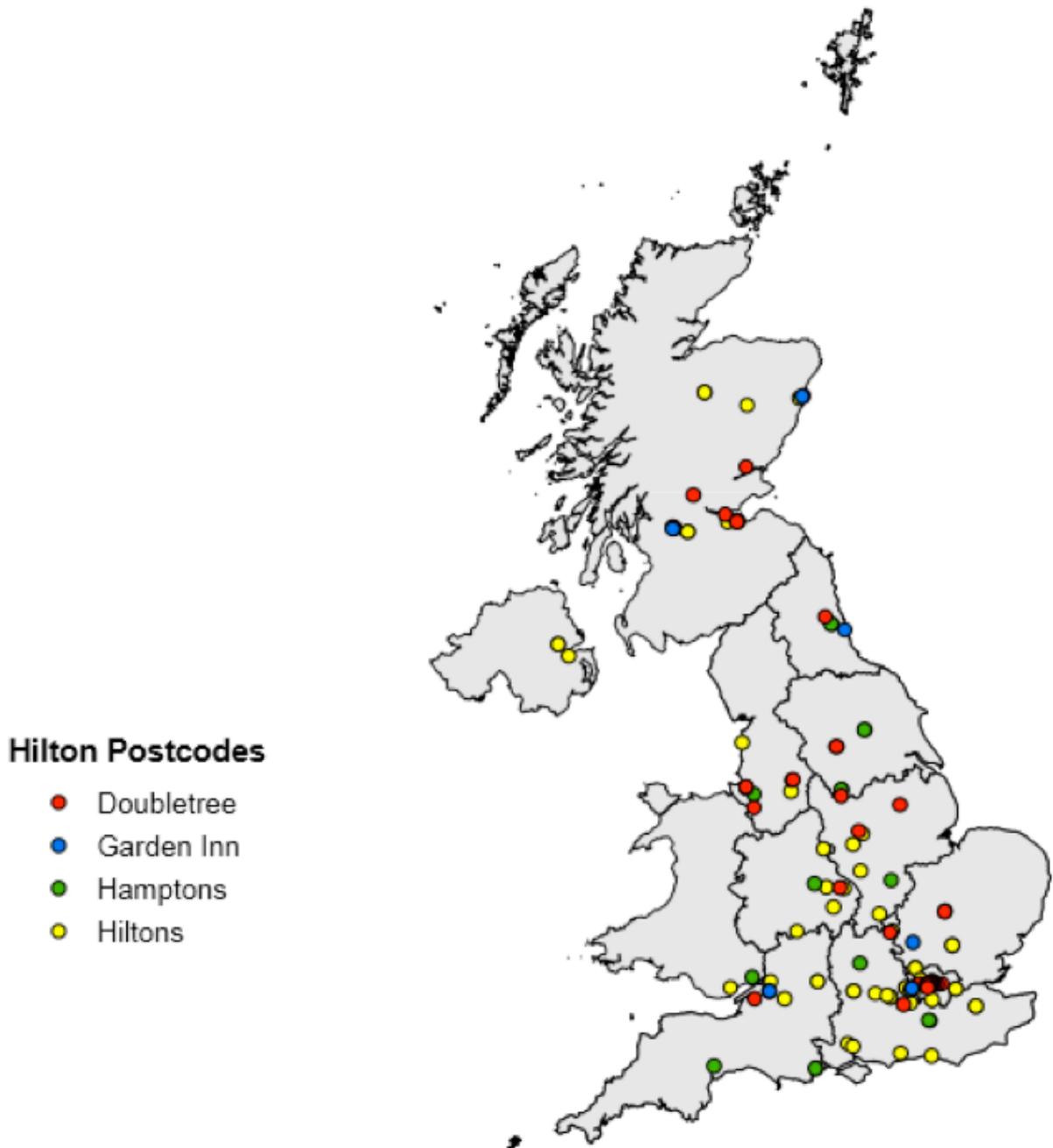
Row percentages	Total	Any CVT courses	Both internal/ external CVT courses	No CVT courses	Provided other forms of CVT	No other forms	Trained At All in 2010	Did not train
Runs a training centre or runs a shared training centre with other organisations	22%	2%	<b>40%</b>	4%	26%	7%	26%	2%
Has a specific person or department with responsibility for arranging Vocational Training	55%	67%	<b>76%</b>	33%	62%	31%	61%	24%
Assesses the skills and competences it needs, but not regularly (as and when required)	39%	36%	30%	46%	36%	51%	37%	51%
Assesses skills and competences as part of the overall planning process in the organisation	49%	58%	<b>67%</b>	32%	56%	23%	55%	18%
Reviews skills and competences of staff by way of structured interviews	35%	41%	<b>52%</b>	22%	40%	16%	39%	14%
Reviews the skills and competences of staff by way of other methods	47%	47%	43%	45%	48%	40%	48%	37%
Planning of Vocational Training within organisation leads to written training plan or programme	48%	63%	<b>75%</b>	20%	56%	19%	56%	10%
Has annual training budget including provision for Vocational Training	35%	46%	<b>55%</b>	14%	42%	9%	41%	5%
Written agreements between Government, local area or trade associations or trade unions regulate provision of Vocational Training	15%	20%	22%	6%	18%	6%	18%	3%
Staff representatives/committees usually involved in the Vocational Training management process	22%	29%	<b>33%</b>	9%	26%	6%	25%	5%
<i>Unweighted sample bases</i>	4604	3244	1752	1360	3889	715	4075	529

International

Sectoral

Qualifications

## Appendix 7: Indication of Hilton UK Properties Offering ISQs



## International Sectoral Qualifications (ISQs) and their use in the UK

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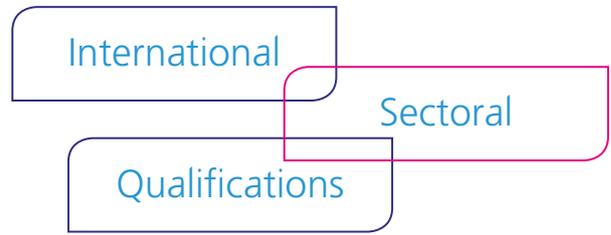
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## Notes

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership (SCQF Partnership) on behalf of the UK National Contact Points (NCPs) for the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) commissioned research into the use of international qualifications in the UK in April 2016.

The EQF Advisory Group has, in the last few years, been paying particular attention to the challenge of recognising “International” qualifications within both the EQF and National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs).

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