

**From 1st cycle (e.g. Bachelors) to 2nd cycle (e.g. Masters) to doctorates:
the differences / 'step changes' between the
respective Dublin descriptors³⁵.**

[and including 'sort cycle' qualifications within the 1st cycle]

The Dublin Descriptors offer generic statements of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with awards that represent the end of each of a Bologna cycle.

They are not meant to be prescriptive; they do not represent threshold or minimum requirements and they are not exhaustive; similar or equivalent characteristics may be added or substituted.

The Descriptors seek to identify the nature of the whole qualification.

The Descriptors are not subject specific nor are they limited to academic, professional or vocational areas. For particular disciplines the Descriptors should be read within the context and use of language of that discipline. Wherever possible, they should be cross-referenced with any expectations/competencies published by the relevant community of scholars and/or practitioners.

³⁵ See: www.jointquality.org

At completion of the cycle students will have / can demonstrate:

knowledge and understanding ..

[short cycle³⁶ .. *in a field of study that builds upon general secondary education and is typically at a level supported by advanced textbooks*]

1st cycle.. *[that is] supported by advanced text books [with] some aspects informed by knowledge at the forefront of their field of study ..*

2nd cycle .. *provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing or applying ideas .. often in a research³⁷ context ..*

Doctorates .. *[includes] a systematic understanding of their field of study and mastery of the methods of research* associated with that field ..*

application of knowledge and understanding ..

[short cycle .. *often in occupational context*]

1st cycle .. *[through] devising and sustaining arguments*

³⁶ *Short cycle*: there are some awards that are made to students who have completed a programme of study within the Bologna first cycle, but which do not represent the full extent of this cycle. Such awards may prepare the student for employment, while also providing preparation for, and access to, studies to completion of the first cycle. These awards are referred to as higher education short cycle (within the first cycle). National systems may have various qualifications within the first cycle. This descriptor is intended for a commonly found type and which often approximates to 120 ECTS credits or equivalent.

³⁷ *research*: the term is used in an inclusive way to accommodate the range of activities that support original and innovative work in the whole range of academic, professional and technological fields, including the humanities, and traditional, performing and other arts. It is not used in any limited or restricted sense, or relating solely to traditional 'scientific method'.

2nd cycle .. *[through] problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts ..*

Doctorates.. *[through the] ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research* with scholarly integrity ..*

[that has] made a contribution that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work some of which merits national or international peer-reviewed publication .

ability to make judgements ..

[short cycle .. *to identify and use data to formulate responses to well-defined concrete and abstract problems]*

1st cycle .. *[through] gathering and interpreting relevant data ..*

2nd cycle .. *the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgments with incomplete data ..*

Doctorates.. *[through] critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas..*

ability to communicate ..

[short cycle .. *their understanding, skills and activities, with peers, supervisors and clients]*

1st cycle .. *information, ideas, problems and solutions ..*

2nd cycle .. *their conclusions and the underpinning knowledge and rationale to specialist and non-specialist audiences ..*

Doctorates.. *with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise ..*

learning skills ..

[short cycle .. *to undertake further studies with some autonomy*
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1st cycle .. *needed to study further with a high level of autonomy ..*

2nd cycle .. *to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous..*

Doctorates.. *expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement ..*