

From the Dublin Descriptors 2004

www.upc.edu/eees/contingut/arxiu/Descriptors_dublin%5B1%5D_2004.pdf

'Second cycle' means Master's degrees

Qualifications that signify completion of the second cycle are awarded to students who:

have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with Bachelor's level, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research³ context;

can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;

have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements;

can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously;

have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.

3. The word '**research**' is used to cover a wide variety of activities, with the context often related to a field of study; the term is used here to represent a careful study or investigation based on a systematic understanding and critical awareness of knowledge. The word 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 creative arts. It is not used in any limited or restricted sense, or relating solely to a traditional 'scientific method'.

From the QAA Website, the The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland - January 2001

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/EWNI/default.asp#annex1>

Descriptor for a qualification at Masters (M) level: Masters degree

Masters degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

i a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice;

ii a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship;

iii originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;

iv conceptual understanding that enables the student:

- to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; and
- to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

a deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;

b demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;

c continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level;

and will have:

d the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:

- the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
- decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; and
- the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.