

Recognition of Professional Qualifications in the EU/EEA

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Free movement of workers in the European Union

Nationals of the Member States of the European Union (the “EU”), of the European Economic Area (the “EEA”) and of Switzerland are entitled to work freely in all 27 countries of the EU.

The Member States of the European Union are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

The Member States of the EEA includes all EU countries as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

Recognition of professional qualifications in the EU/EEA

To support free movement, EU law enables those qualified in certain regulated professions to have their qualifications recognised throughout the EU.

EU law also applies in general to other regulated professionals unless otherwise stated.

Depending on the particular profession, professional qualifications may be eligible for recognition under Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications (“the Directive”) or under other profession-specific EU legislation.

Where can I check if my profession is regulated in Ireland?

The European Commission maintains a central database where you can check if your profession is regulated in Ireland and if you therefore need to have your qualifications recognised here.

The database can be searched on their website at:

<https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regprof/index.cfm?action=homepage>

A list of professions that are regulated in Ireland and the relevant regulatory bodies can be found on the website of the Department of Education at:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d7527-professional-qualifications-recognition/>

What happens if my profession is unregulated in Ireland?

If your profession is not regulated in Ireland, you do not need to have your professional qualification from your home country recognised here in order to take up work.

Example:

- An Austrian mountain guide does not require their qualification to be recognised as mountain-guiding is unregulated in Ireland. They can therefore apply for such positions directly.

Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications

Who can have their professional qualifications recognised under the Directive?

The Directive allows professionals who are **fully qualified** to practise a profession in one Member State to practise the same profession in another Member State.

The Directive applies to EU nationals and to nationals of Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland.

As well as this, in Ireland, nationals of any other non-EU or non-EEA country can avail of the Directive if they hold a qualification from an EU or EEA country and are the family member of an EU citizen.

If you are not an EU/EEA national and want to have your Irish qualification recognised so that you can work in another EU or EEA country, you can also do this if you are a lawful long-term resident there, the holder of an EU blue card, a seasonal worker or a refugees, or the family member of an EU citizen.

The qualification that you seek to have recognised must have been awarded by a competent authority in the EU/EEA, as set out in the Directive.

The Directive applies only if the profession you want to practise in a host Member State is equivalent to the profession for which you are qualified in your home Member State.

Example:

- A qualified Bulgarian nurse in Ireland **can** have their qualification recognised.

- An American doctor who holds a medical degree from a French university and who lives in Ireland with their French spouse **can also** have their qualification recognised.

What professions does the Directive apply to?

Under the Directive, a wide range of professional qualifications are eligible for recognition. Depending on the particular profession, a person's level of qualification or the nature of their work, an individual's qualification may be eligible for:

- Automatic recognition
- Case-by-case recognition
- Temporary recognition

Certain professions are not covered by the Directive and have specific legislation and rules that apply to them. These professions are covered in a separate section below.

Automatic Recognition under the Directive

The Directive allows for the automatic recognition of a number of qualifications in Ireland, where a certain minimum qualification is achieved. These are:

- Architects
- Dentists
- Doctors
- Midwives
- Nurses
- Pharmacists
- Veterinary surgeons

The automatic recognition of these qualifications is done by, and registered with, the "competent authority" for each profession, which is generally the regulatory body for that

particular profession. The relevant authorities are listed in the Directive and you can find a list of the relevant Irish authorities in **Annex 1** below.

The minimum qualifications needed for automatic recognition for each profession are listed in **Annex 2** below.

Where a person does not hold the minimum qualifications and therefore does not qualify for automatic recognition, they may still be eligible to apply to have their qualification recognised on a case-by-case basis, as explained in the next section.

Example:

A Romanian dentist living in Ireland must apply to the Dental Council of Ireland.

A German midwife living in Ireland must apply to the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland.

Case-by-Case Recognition under the Directive

Under the Directive, other regulated professional qualifications can be recognised on a case-by-case basis. These professions can include:

- Electrician
- Teacher
- Architect (those whose qualifications fall outside automatic recognition)
- Doctor (those whose qualifications fall outside automatic recognition)
- Accountant
- Pharmacist (those whose qualifications fall outside automatic recognition)
- Estate agent
- Gas installer
- Dental hygienist
- Security guard

- Dietitians/dieticians
- Occupational therapists
- Radiographers and radiation therapists
- Social workers
- Speech and language therapists/speech therapists
- Optometrists and dispensing opticians
- Physiotherapists
- Articulated dumper operation
- Built-up roof felting
- Crane operation
- Excavator operation
- Locating under-ground services
- Mini digger operation
- Scaffolding
- Shotfiring
- Signing, lighting and guarding on roads
- Slinging/signalling
- Telescopic handler operation
- Tractor/dozer operation
- Roof and wall cladding/sheeting
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- Ireland recognises qualifications when the applicant has full access to the same profession in their home country.
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- Ireland also grants recognition to professionals whose profession is not regulated in the country of origin but who have worked full-time in that profession for one year in the past 10 years.
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- Ireland may, in both of the above circumstances, impose compensatory measures such as an adaptation period of up to three years, or an aptitude test, when there are substantial differences in education. This means that the relevant authority can ask

you to undergo further examinations or training in order to meet the minimum qualifications.

How to apply for recognition under the Directive

When seeking to have your qualification recognised, you will need to provide official supporting documentation that shows what your qualifications are. You may have to provide documentation to show what was involved in obtaining those qualifications.

This documentation would include your final degree, your transcripts and examination results for your qualifications, and certified translations of these where necessary.

In relation to automatic recognition, if you hold the minimum qualification set out in the Directive, evidence of this should be sufficient to obtain recognition. The minimum qualifications are set out in **Annex 2**.

For most regulated professions, having your qualification recognised can be done online with the relevant regulatory body.

A list of the professions that are regulated in Ireland and the relevant regulatory bodies can be found on the Department of Education's website at:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d7527-professional-qualifications-recognition/>

You may also be required to take an English-language assessment or provide evidence of your competence in English, if it is not your first language.

Where you do not hold the minimum qualifications for automatic recognition or where you are seeking recognition on a case-by-case basis, your qualifications may entitle you to a partial recognition of your qualifications which can exempt you from having to undertake certain further training or assessment should you wish to practice your profession in Ireland.

Example:

- A Latvian general practitioner doctor living in Ireland must:
 - Consult the Medical Council's eligibility chart
 - Register for an online application account at www.medicalcouncil.ie
 - Submit an online application for assessment
 - Submit supporting documentation
 - Await a decision of the Medical Council

What is the European Professional Card and which professions can apply for it?

A small number of professions can use an electronic system called the European Professional Card ("EPC") to have their professional qualifications recognised in another EU/EEA country. It is not a physical card but is rather electronic proof that you have passed administrative checks. This can be done at:

https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/work/professional-qualifications/european-professional-card/index_en.htm

The EPC procedure can be used if you are a:

- Nurse responsible for general care
- Pharmacist
- Physiotherapist
- Mountain guide
- Real estate agent

After you get the EPC, and before you take up employment in Ireland, you must register with the relevant regulatory body, set out in **Annex 3**.

For example:

- A Spanish pharmacist living in Ireland can apply for an EPC online and then must register with the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland

Temporary Recognition under the Directive

It is possible to have your qualification temporarily recognised in certain circumstances. The applicable rules are different depending on whether you want to establish permanently in a Member State or just work temporarily. There are different rules and evidential requirements set out in the Directive for temporary working arrangements.

In order to be temporarily recognised, this is assessed on a case-by-case basis and the relevant regulatory body will examine the duration, frequency, regularity and continuity of activity.

The regulatory body may require a written declaration in advance and may check professional qualifications before you can provide services for the first time. This applies in particular where the profession in question has public health or safety implications or is not eligible for automatic recognition.

In other cases, temporary recognition may be provided on the basis that you make a declaration in advance that your qualifications are sufficient. In these circumstances, you may also be required to supply your clients with certain information and to inform the public social security bodies in advance (or afterwards, in urgent circumstances) about the services that you are providing on a temporary basis.

Example:

A Portuguese midwife can apply to the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland for temporary recognition in the same way as for permanent recognition.

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland will examine duration, frequency, regularity, and continuity of their provision of midwifery services when deciding to grant this or not.

What professions are not covered by the Directive?

Certain professions have their own particular profession-specific legislation. These are:

Lawyers;

Sailors and seafarers;

Statutory auditors;

Insurance intermediaries;

Commercial agents;

Certain professions handling toxic agents; and

Some road haulage and road passenger transport operators.

In the case of sailors, seafarers, road haulage and road passenger transport operators, commercial agents and certain professions handling toxic agents, they are not regulated in Ireland and so do not require recognition.

Statutory auditors, depending on their specific qualification, must apply to the relevant accountancy regulatory body. These are set out on the Department of Education's list of regulated professions and regulatory bodies, accessible on their website at:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d7527-professional-qualifications-recognition/>

Insurance intermediaries must apply to the Central Bank of Ireland for authorisation and registration.

The qualification of lawyers is regulated in Ireland by the Honorable Society of King's Inns for barristers and the Law Society of Ireland for solicitors.

For these professions the relevant regulatory body will examine your individual qualifications and supporting documentation and may provide you with full or partial recognition.

How do I get started?

If you believe that you are entitled to recognition of your qualification, it is recommended that you contact the relevant regulatory body in Ireland. They will be able to advise you on the processes that are open to you, as well as timeframes, fees and necessary documentation. Many of the regulatory bodies have prepared guides on how to navigate the process.

If you are unsure about whether or not you are sufficiently qualified in order to have your qualification recognised, you should not proceed on the expectation that your application for registration will be successful.

To make the process easier, you should ensure that you have certified documentation, as well as certified genuine translations where necessary.

What happens if my application for recognition is refused?

If a regulatory body refuses your application, they are required to provide you with reasons for that refusal. Certain regulatory bodies will allow you to make an appeal of the decision but others may require you to apply again. If you are required to apply again you may be required to pay a further fee.

If you choose to appeal or apply again, you should ensure that the reasons why you were originally refused are adequately addressed – for example by providing further supporting documentation.

If you believe that you have been refused incorrectly, you should contact the regulatory body in order to resolve the issue, or consult with a solicitor who may be able to advise you in

relation to your options as promptly as possible, such as appealing to the High Court in certain circumstances

If you submit false or fraudulent documents to a regulatory body, this may constitute a criminal offence and may result in the regulatory body disallowing you from applying again, or informing the regulatory bodies of other Member States, including your home country.

What happens if I am a national of the United Kingdom?

As of 1 January 2021, mutual recognition of professional qualifications between the EU and the UK no longer applies and UK nationals cannot avail of the Directive.

However, if you are a national of the United Kingdom, you can avail of recognition of your professional qualifications in the same way as a national of a non-EU/EEA country, as set out above.

As well as this, some regulatory bodies may still recognise qualifications from the United Kingdom on the basis of their own rules applicable to the qualifications of people from outside the EU or EEA.

If you have already had your qualification recognised by a regulatory body **before the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020**, there will be no change and you can continue to practise in Ireland or elsewhere in the EU.

Examples:

A British veterinary surgeon who holds their qualification from a Spanish university and who lives in Ireland with their Spanish spouse can have their qualification recognised under the Directive.

A British veterinary surgeon who holds their qualification from a British university and who lives in Ireland can still apply to the Veterinary Council of Ireland to have their qualification recognised under rules applicable to third country nationals.

- A British veterinary surgeon who holds their qualification from a British university and who lives in Ireland and had their qualification recognised by the Veterinary Council of Ireland before 31 December 2020 is **not** required to have their qualification recognised again and **can** practice.

For further Information on the recognition of professional qualifications you may wish to visit:

- **Department of Education. Recognition of Professional Qualifications**
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d7527-professional-qualifications-recognition/>
- **Citizens Information, Recognition of Professional Qualifications in Ireland**
https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/returning_to_ireland/starting_work/Recognition_of_professional_qualifications_in_ireland.html
- **European Commission, Recognition of professional qualifications in practice**
https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/single-market-services/free-movement-professionals/recognition-professional-qualifications-practice_en#:~:text=The%20recognition%20of%20professional%20qualifications%20laid%20down%20in%20Directive%202005,or%20architects%20within%20the%20EU.
- **European Commission, User Guide for Directive 2005/36/EC**
<https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/40185>
- **Solvit**
- https://ec.europa.eu/solvit/index_e

Annex 1

Competent Authorities / Regulatory Bodies for Automatic Recognition

Profession	Competent Authority / Regulatory Body
Architects	<p>The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland 8 Merrion Square Dublin 2</p> <p>Phone: 00 353 1 676 1703 Website: www.riai.ie Email: info@riai.ie</p>
Dentists	<p>The Dental Council 57 Merrion Square Dublin 2</p> <p>Phone: 00 353 1 676 2069 Website: www.dentalcouncil.ie Email: info@dentalcouncil.ie</p>
Doctors	<p>Medical Council Kingram House Kingram Place Dublin 2</p> <p>Phone: 00 353 1 498 3100 Website: www.medicalcouncil.ie Email: educationandtraining@mcirl.ie</p>
Midwives	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland

	<p>18-20 Carysfort Avenue Blackrock Co Dublin</p> <p>Phone: 00 353 1 639 8500 Website: www.nmbi.ie</p>
Nurses	<p>Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland 18-20 Carysfort Avenue Blackrock Co Dublin</p> <p>Phone: 00 353 1 639 8500 Website: www.nmbi.ie</p>
Pharmacists	<p>The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland PSI House Fenian Street Dublin 2</p> <p>Phone: 00 353 1 218 4000 Website: www.thepsi.ie Email: info@thepsi.ie</p>

Annex 2

Minimum Qualifications for Automatic Recognition

Profession	Minimum Qualification
Architects	<p>The authorities in any EU country must recognise any of the architects' qualifications listed in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annex V, point 5.7.1 of the Directive <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annex VI of the Directive, provided your studies started no later than the academic year mentioned <p>Professional qualifications are automatically recognised if they are from a university or equivalent-level institution and if the studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• lasted at least 5 years' full-time or 4 years' full-time with the completion of two years' professional traineeship• had architecture as the principal component• had theoretical and practical components• taught the basic knowledge, skills and competences listed in Article 46(2) of the Directive

<p>Dentists</p>	<p>Basic dentists' qualifications</p> <p>The authorities in any EU country must automatically recognise any of the basic dentists' qualifications listed in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annex V, point 5.3.2 of the Directive <p>All these qualifications meet the basic criteria for automatic recognition, which are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 5 years of full-time theoretical and practical study of at least 5000 hours • coverage of the knowledge and skills listed in Article 34 and Annex V, point 5.3.1 of the Directive <p>If the qualification is not listed in Annex V, point 5.3.2 because it does not meet the basic criteria, it may still be recognised under an acquired rights regime: dentists must demonstrate at least 3 years of professional experience within the last 5 years (Art. 23).</p> <p>Specialist dentists' qualifications</p> <p>Some specialist dentists' qualifications are automatically recognised in certain EU countries. These are listed in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Annex V, point 5.3.3 of the Directive</p>
<p>Doctors</p>	<p>Basic medical training</p>

Basic medical training is automatically recognised throughout the EU. This entitles doctors to access the profession in any EU country if their training

- is listed in Annex V, point 5.1.1 of Directive 2005/36/EC, which conforms to Art. 24 of the Directive

or

- benefits from acquired rights (Art. 23 and 30 of the Directive)

General practitioner qualifications

General practitioner training is automatically recognised throughout the EU. This entitles doctors to work in any EU country if their training

- is listed in Annex V, point 5.1.4 of Directive 2005/36/EC, which conforms to Art. 28 of the Directive

or

- benefits from acquired rights (Art. 30 of the Directive)

Specialist doctors' qualifications

56 specialist doctors' qualifications are automatically recognised in certain EU countries. These are listed in

- Annex V, point 5.1.3 of the Directive

<p>Midwives</p>	<p>The authorities in all EU countries must recognise any of the midwives' qualifications listed in Annex V, point 5.2 provided they are issued after</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 years' full-time midwife training • Plus 2 years' professional practice depending on the level of the diploma <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • successful completion of general-care nurses' training • Plus full-time midwife training of at least 2 years or 3,600 hours <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • successful completion of general-care nurse's training • Plus full-time midwife training of at least 18 months or 3,000 hours • Plus 1 year's professional practice as a midwife <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For more details on the training requirements for automatic recognition of midwives' qualifications, see Articles 40–43 and Annex V, point 5.5.1 of the Directive <p>If the qualification is not listed in Annex V, point 5.5.2 because it does not meet the basic criteria, it may still be recognised under an acquired rights regime: midwives need to demonstrate at least 3 years of professional experience within</p>
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	<p>the last 5 years (Art. 23, but please see Art. 43 for other situations).</p>
<p>Nurses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum training required for automatic recognition of professional qualifications for general care nurses is at least 3 years of full-time study and 4,600 hours covering the subjects mentioned in Annex V, point 5.2.1 of the Directive. <p>For a list of all qualifications that meet these requirements, see the list of general care nurse qualifications in point 5.2.2 of Annex V of the Directive.</p> <p>If the qualification is not listed in Annex V, point 5.2.2 because it does not meet the basic criteria, it may still be recognised under an acquired rights regime. General care nurses must demonstrate at least 3 years of professional experience within the last 5 years (Art. 23).</p> <p>There is no automatic recognition for specialist nurses.</p>
<p>Pharmacists</p>	<p>The authorities in any EU country must recognise any of the pharmacists' qualifications listed in Annex V, point 5.6.2 of the Directive</p>

	<p>All these qualifications meet the basic criteria for automatic recognition, which are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training of at least 5 years, including 4 years full-time theoretical and practical study and a 6-month traineeship in a pharmacy • coverage of the knowledge and skills listed in Article 44 and Annex V, point 5.6.1 of the Directive. <p>If the qualification is not listed in Annex V, point 5.6.2 because it does not meet the basic criteria, it may still be recognised under an acquired rights regime: pharmacists must demonstrate at least 3 years of professional experience within the last 5 years (Art. 23).</p> <p>The authorities in some EU countries may require pharmacists to have a certain amount of professional experience before allowing them to carry out certain functions.</p>
<p>Veterinary surgeons</p>	<p>The authorities in any EU country must recognise any of the veterinary qualifications listed in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annex V, point 5.4.2 of the Directive <p>All these qualifications meet the basic criteria for automatic recognition which are</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• at least 5 years' full-time theoretical and practical study• coverage of the subjects listed in Annex V, point 5.4.1 of the Directive <p>If the qualification is not listed in Annex V, point 5.4.2 because it does not meet the basic criteria, it may still be recognised under an acquired rights regime: veterinary surgeons must demonstrate at least 3 years of professional experience within the last 5 years (Art. 23 but please see Art. 39 for other situations).</p>
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Annex 3

Competent Authorities / Regulatory Bodies for European Professional Card (EPC) Professions

Profession	Competent Authority / Regulatory Body
Nurse responsible for general care	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland 18-20 Carysfort Avenue Blackrock Co Dublin Phone: 00 353 1 639 8500 Website: www.nmbi.ie
Pharmacist	The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland PSI House Fenian Street Dublin 2 Phone: 00 353 1 218 4000 Website: www.thepsi.ie Email: info@thepsi.ie
Physiotherapist	CORU Regulating Health & Social Care Professionals Infinity Building George's Court George's Lane Smithfield Dublin 7

	<p>Phone: 00 353 1 293 3160</p> <p>Website: www.coru.ie</p> <p>Email: registration@coru.ie</p> <p>Email: info@coru.ie</p>
Mountain guide	Not applicable, as this profession is not regulated in Ireland.
Real estate agent	<p>Property Services Regulatory Authority</p> <p>Abbey Buildings</p> <p>Abbey Road</p> <p>Navan</p> <p>Co. Meath</p> <p>Phone: 00 353 46 903 3800</p> <p>Website: www.psr.ie</p> <p>Email: info@psr.ie</p>