Recognition of professional qualifications in Dietetics/Clinical Nutrition under Directive 2005/36/EC

Information Note on Dietetic Applications

This note should be read in conjunction with the other information on this website and the application form. You should ensure that the information is up-to-date when you submit your application.

The note is for guidance only and the provisions of Directive 2005/36/EC apply to the applications process. It may be periodically updated and you should ensure that this note is up to date when you make your application.

(1) Who must have their qualifications validated?

Persons holding qualifications obtained outside the Republic of Ireland (including those obtained in the United Kingdom/Northern Ireland) must apply directly to the Department of Health for validation of their qualification.

Persons with UK qualifications should read Question 12.

(2) What is the Validation Process?

Validation is the process whereby non-Irish qualifications are assessed for their equivalence to the Irish qualifications required to work in the public health sector in Ireland. These qualifications may be subject to amendment from time to time by the Health Service Executive. Certain professionals, including dietitians, cannot be employed in their professional capacity in the publicly funded health service unless their qualifications have been validated.

The qualifications of nationals of EEA countries (member states of the European Union plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) & Switzerland are assessed under Directive 2005/36/EC. An administrative process is in place for the assessment of other qualifications as the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation requires Working Permit Visa/Green Card applicants from non-EEA countries to be in possession of a letter of validation.

If granted recognition, an applicant is advised that the professional qualification he/she possesses is equivalent to the Irish entry-level qualification and that the applicant is eligible for consideration for employment in the Irish publicly-funded health sector. Suitability for a particular post including inter alia qualification, fitness to practice, language proficiency and Garda vetting, if appropriate, is a matter for the individual employer.

1 It is the responsibility of applicants to acquaint themselves fully with the provisions of the Directive, information on which is at www.doh.ie or http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/index_en.htm.
Qualification recognition is not a licensing or statutory registration system.

(3) What is the reference qualification?

The minimum approved professional qualifications for appointment as a Basic Grade Dietitian in the HSE is:

a) the B.Sc degree in Human Nutrition from the University of Dublin, or
b) the Diploma in Dietetics and Nutrition from the College of Technology, Kevin Street, Dublin, or
c) a qualification in Dietetics at least equivalent to (a) or (b).

The Dietetic course(s) you undertook must:

1. include a clinical placement which was supervised and assessed and include both the hospital and the community setting;
2. include a significant amount of Human Nutrition and Dietetics as well as other relevant subjects;
3. lead to a qualification in Dietetics/Clinical Nutrition;
4. confer eligibility to work as a dietitian in the country where you studied.

Many college courses have a nutrition component, such as Nutrition, Food Science, Agricultural Engineering, but are not equivalent because they do not include the criteria listed above.

(4) How do I know if I am eligible to apply?

You must be eligible to practise as a dietitian in the country where your dietetic qualification was obtained. UK qualifications holders must have completed a Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approved training programme and be eligible for registration with the HCPC.

(5) Decision-making criteria on applications

In the case of dietetic qualifications, the Directive provides for an assessment, on a case-by-case basis, of the qualifications of an applicant against those required to practise in Ireland. If the activities covered by the profession in the home and in Ireland are not comparable, then the qualifications cannot be recognised. If the activities are comparable but deficits in the qualifications are identified, subsequent post-qualification professional experience of the applicant must be considered. If deficits still remain, the applicant must be offered a compensation measure, a choice of completing an adaptation period or taking an aptitude test.

It is therefore important that you provide full information on your professional training and your post-qualification professional experience as a dietitian. The most common request for additional information on applications is due to the applicant not including adequate information on:
- the total number of hours spent in each subject;
- information on the structure of the research project;
- information on the structure, duration and assessment of the clinical placement.

(6) **Who is the competent authority?**

The Department of Health is the competent authority for the validation of non-Irish qualifications in nutrition & dietetics, and is advised on applications by the Irish Nutrition & Dietetic Institute (INDI). The process is administered by the Validation Unit of that Department to which all queries should be addressed by email to Validation_Unit@health.gov.ie

The INDI does not have any direct contact with applicants.

(7) **Is there a fee for validation?**

A fee of €75.00 is payable to the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute for its advice on the assessment process.

A bank transfer in the appropriate sum should be made to the following bank account: **Account No: 87167004, Sort Code: 93-20-86, Allied Irish Banks, (AIB), 7/12 Dame Street, Dublin 2, Ireland, IBAN Code: IE30 AIBK93208687167004, Swift Code: AIBKIE2D.**

Payment by cheque, postal order or bank draft made payable to the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute and drawn on an Irish bank is also acceptable.

This is not an INDI membership fee; it covers the cost of the provision of advice on applications by the INDI. It is non-refundable regardless of the outcome of the validation process.

(8) **Where do I send my documents and fee?**

All documents relating to the application for validation should be sent directly to the Validation Unit, Department of Health, Hawkins House, Dublin 2.

(9) **What happens to my application?**

The Directive requires applications to be acknowledged within one month and the applicant informed of any missing document. Please ensure that all requested documents are submitted, referenced, witnessed/translated and stamped as appropriate, as delays will result if applications are incomplete. The Validation Unit will confirm if your application is complete.
When a complete application is received, the Department of Health forwards the application for consideration to the INDI Validation Subgroup. This group is part of the Education Board of the INDI. In exceptional circumstances, an applicant may be requested to attend for interview. The INDI makes a recommendation to the Department of Health which is responsible for the ultimate decision.

The Directive requires a final decision to be communicated to the applicant within 4 months of submission of a complete application. Applications from non-EEA nationals will be issued with a decision letter within 6 months.

(10) How will I be informed of the decision on my application?

The Department of Health will issue the applicant with a decision letter within 4 months of submission of a complete application in the case of EEA nationals and within 6 months in the case of non-EEA nationals.

These time frames are required to provide for a full assessment, on a case-by-case basis, of each application - please see general information on this website.

(11) Can I appeal the decision?

A decision of the competent authority can be appealed to the High Court within 42 days of the date of the decision being taken (or not being taken in time). Section 23 (1) of S.I. No. 139 of 2008, which transposes Directive 2005/36/EC into Irish law, refers and should you wish to pursue this route, you may wish to contact a solicitor eligible to practise in Ireland.

(12) Note for UK qualification holders

Because of familiarity with UK training criteria, UK qualification holders do not have to complete certain sections (2, 3 & 10) of the application form or submit certain documentation i.e.

(i) A copy of the syllabus of the Nutrition and Dietetics course;
(ii) Evidence that the course leads to eligibility to register as a dietitian with the HCPC.

(13) Decision Letter

A decision letter is not time-limited. It is a valuable document and should be retained in a safe place e.g. with your degree documentation. It is suggested that notarised copies be used for the purpose of recruitment and the original retained by you as you may require it for future recruitment.

(14) Statutory Registration
The Health and Social Care Professionals Council (CORU) is in start-up mode and will in time provide for the statutory registration of twelve separate health and social care professions, including dietitians. The Dietitians Registration Board has been established and it is expected that it will open its register in the coming months. You are advised to keep up to date with developments by checking its website www.coru.ie from time to time.

It is the responsibility of individual dietitians to ensure compliance with any future requirement in relation to statutory registration. Your decision letter may be required in this process.

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