

Information Note on the Recognition of Non-Irish Qualifications in Psychology

1. Introduction

Recognition of professional qualifications is not to be regarded as an endorsement or a declaration of the applicant's suitability for employment in any particular post, which is a separate matter for assessment by the employer in the normal way in accordance with the prescribed selection criteria.

All applicants for qualification recognition should be aware that there is now a Government moratorium on recruitment /replacement of staff in the publicly funded health sector in Ireland. This means that positions in Ireland for health professionals, including psychologists, are very scarce. The moratorium also poses significant challenges in relation to supervision arrangements for applicants who require Periods of Adaptation.

The assessment of qualifications is without prejudice to any right to work or to residency in Ireland. Non-EEA nationals should access the website of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (www.dbei.ie) for information on employment permits and the website of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (www.inis.gov.ie) in relation to residency.

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation requires Work Permit/Green Card applicants from non-EEA countries to have their professional qualifications recognised. Non-EEA nationals should be aware that certain health professions, including psychologists, have been removed from the Green Card scheme which had been put in place to facilitate non-EEA nationals who wished to work in Ireland and who were qualified in a restricted number of strategically important occupations.

2. Directive 2005/36/EC

Psychology qualifications are assessed under the general system of Directive 2005/36/EC. It provides for an assessment on a case-by-case basis of the qualifications of an applicant against those required to practise in the host Member State **if the professional activities covered are comparable.**

If deficits in the qualification are identified, subsequent post-qualification professional experience of the applicant must be considered. If deficits in qualifications remain, the host Member State must offer an applicant a compensation measure - the choice of completing an adaptation period or taking an aptitude test. (This does not apply in the case of non-EEA nationals.)

It is therefore important to provide full information on both your qualifications and subsequent work experience (see Supervised Professional Experience/Employment beneath).

The Minister for Health is the competent authority with responsibility for validating non-Irish qualifications under EU Directive 2005/36/EC. The Psychological Society

of Ireland (PsSI) has been requested by the Department of Health to scrutinise applications for statements of equivalence in psychology from individuals who obtained their qualifications outside of Ireland. The PsSI has established an Expert Validation Committee (EVC) to assess applications and its recommendations are ratified by the Society Council. The Society, following scrutiny of non-Irish qualifications, will advise the Department of Health who then make the final decision and issue a decision letter to the applicant.

3. Employment as a Psychologist in Ireland

There are 3 sets of information and application scrutiny forms, one for each Office of employment in the Health Services. The 3 areas are:

1. Office of Clinical Psychologist
2. Office of Psychologist in Community Care, designated area of Educational Psychology
3. Office of Psychologist in Community Care, designated area of Counselling Psychology

Please see the Appendix to this note which describes the different areas.

It is important that you apply for recognition **for one Office only**, that whose qualifications most closely match your qualifications. If you are not sure, refer to the notes on the different areas. Please be aware that each application for each Office attracts a fee. Sending more than one application is likely to lead to a delay in processing your application.

4. Qualifications

The PsSI understands that in some countries only one qualification is awarded after a period of study covering both general and applied psychology. In such a combined single qualification, the undergraduate part would usually be considered to be the first two/three years and the postgraduate part would usually be considered to be the final two years.

5. Training Placements as part of your Postgraduate Training

Training Placements are an integral part of professional postgraduate training. **You may not double count** training placements or periods of supervised work experience, academic courses, or research. If a period of supervised experience included work with more than one clinical group, for example, Adult Mental Health and Intellectual Disability, you must not count any days (or hours) under both headings. You may however give the proportion of time with each client group for example, 40% Adult and 60% Intellectual disability, and assign part of the period to each area.

Supervised experience gained before or during your undergraduate degree cannot be counted towards professional supervised experience.

The Committee cannot consider practical experience acquired PRIOR to the commencement of professional postgraduate training. Theoretical knowledge and study is considered to be an essential foundation before the start of practical training and/or work as a trainee psychologist.

Work in another capacity such as care work, residential work, teaching, social work and so on, can not be counted as supervised work as a Professional Psychologist.

When the form asks for the total number of training placement or working days, please ensure that these are provided as accurately as possible for example, 35 days, 21 January 2007 to 9 March 2007. If your placements or supervised experience were calculated in hours, please give the number of hours, and also convert this to working days (one working day equals seven hours).

When calculating the number of working or placement training days do not include weekends, or holidays, or days spent in formal academic coursework.

6. Supervised Professional Experience/Employment

If deficits in your qualification are identified, subsequent post-qualification professional experience of the applicant is considered. Please provide information on your employment since your postgraduate qualification (Section F) and on supervised clinical experience since you obtained your professional qualification (Section E).

7. Completing the Application Form

The application form should be completed as fully as possible and any supporting documentation should be referenced clearly to the section in the form to which it refers.

Before submitting your application, ensure that all relevant sections have been completed and that all supporting documentation is enclosed and clearly referenced to the Section on the application form to which they relate. Applicants should ensure that all required documentation is provided as incomplete applications may result in an incomplete assessment of your qualifications/ work experience.

You should ensure that all relevant information is sent with the scrutiny form to avoid delays. Sending large amounts of additional materials, which are not directly relevant to the application, is likely to be counter-productive. Be selective when deciding what to send.

The application form is available in Microsoft Word on <http://health.gov.ie/about-us/recognition-of-qualifications/>. It should be completed in typed print, signed and submitted **in hardcopy** with all supporting documentation. This form and other documents submitted will be photocopied for Committee members so please do not make modifications which will make it difficult to photocopy.

Any documentation which is not in English must be translated and authenticated as true copies of the originals.

Please send the application form and supporting documentation to:

**Validation Unit
Department of Health
Block 1, Miesian Plaza
50 - 58 Lower Baggot Street
Dublin 2
D02 XW14
Ireland**

DO NOT ENCLOSE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTATION

All documentation must be witnessed as true copies of the originals by a by a member of the Garda Síochána, Justice of the Peace, Commissioner for Oaths (www.citizensinformation.ie/en/justice/civil_law/commissioners_for_oaths.html), practising Solicitor, your training establishment or Public Notary (www.notarypublic.ie). The signatory must not be a relative of the applicant. The signatory:

- *(a) must SEE the original document and sign to that effect on the photocopy*
- *(b) must state that the photocopy is a true copy of the original document which has not been altered in any way, by writing “This photocopy is a true copy of the original document which has not been altered in any way” on the photocopy*
- *(c) must PRINT their name, position and contact address and telephone number on the photocopy*
- *(d) must DATE the copy*
- *(e) must sign the photocopy using BLUE ink*

If documents are provided in any language except English, authenticated translations must be supplied.

8. Processing Time Periods

In accordance with Article 51.1 of Directive 2005/36/EC, an acknowledgement of receipt of an application from EEA nationals will issue within one month and will inform the applicant of any missing documentation. Only when all documents are received will your application be submitted to the PsSI.

A decision will be made on your application within 4 months of the acknowledgement of your complete application. Clarification of the detail of your application may be sought during its assessment. A three month period will normally be allowed for applicants to forward any additional information requested.

Any subsequent application will be treated as a new application and a fee will be charged.

9. Scrutiny Fee

A cheque, postal order or bank draft for €500 made payable to the Psychological Society of Ireland and drawn on an IRISH BANK should be enclosed with your application.

10. Appeals

Regulation 23 of SI 139 of 2008, which transposes Directive 205/36/EC into Irish law, states that an applicant may appeal to the High Court any decision of a competent authority or any failure of a competent authority to make a decision, in relation to the application by him/her. If you wish to appeal a decision, you are advised to consult a solicitor. Such an appeal shall be brought within 42 days either of the date upon which the decision concerned is communicated to the applicant concerned, or in the case of failure to make a decision, within 42 days of the expiration of the periods of time specified in Regulation 22 (2).

A decision of the High Court on an appeal under this Regulation is final and not appealable.

11. Correspondence

All correspondence on applications should be addressed to the Validation Unit, Department of Health (email: validation_unit@health.gov.ie).

Appendix

DEFINITION OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Clinical psychology is the application of psychological theories, models and research to a range of psychological, emotional, mental health and developmental problems. Clinical psychologists provide a variety of services including assessment, therapy, and consultancy services. They work primarily, but not exclusively in child and/or adult and intellectual disability services where emotional, behavioural, mental health or developmental difficulties are addressed.

DEFINITION OF COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

Counselling psychology, as a psychological speciality, facilitates personal and interpersonal functioning across the life span with a focus on emotional, social, vocational, educational, health-related, and developmental concerns. Counselling psychologists can therefore be found working in such diverse areas as schools and colleges, industrial workplaces and health services. Counselling psychology encompasses a broad range of practices that help people improve their well being, alleviate distress and maladjustment, resolve crises, and increase their ability to live more highly functioning lives. Counselling psychologists work with people who have experienced a range of emotional and psychological difficulties. These include problems of identity and bereavement, relationship problems, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

DEFINITION OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Educational psychologists work to support the psychological and educational development of students of any age in the education system. This includes working collaboratively with students, with their parents or guardians and with the people who work with the students. Their work can involve both assessment and intervention within the education setting. They are also likely to be involved in training, research and policy-making on related issues.

Applicants should consult the accreditation guidelines for the assessment of postgraduate professional programmes on the PsSI website (www.psihq.ie) so that they are fully aware of Irish requirements.