



Recognition of a Third Country Pharmacist Qualification as a Qualification Appropriate for Practice in Ireland

Information & Explanatory Booklet (2022.03)

(In accordance with Part 4 of the Pharmacy Act 2007 and the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Registration)
Rules 2008 (S.I. No 494 of 2008))

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Data Protection

The PSI takes its data protection obligations seriously. All personal information submitted by you will be treated in accordance with Data Protection legislation. Please review the Data Protection Statement (bit.ly/PSIDataProtection) on our website for details of our use of your information and your rights in relation to this.

Introduction

An applicant's qualification must be recognised as "appropriate for practice" in accordance with Section 16 of the Pharmacy Act 2007. This Act regulates the practice and profession of pharmacy in Ireland.

"Third Country" means all countries other than Ireland and countries which are members of the European Union or part of the European Economic Area. From January 1st, 2021, following Brexit, "Third Country" also includes the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. However, this information and explanatory booklet related to applicants holding a qualification from a third country **other than** Great Britain or Northern Ireland.

Prior to being eligible to register as a pharmacist in Ireland an applicant must have their qualification recognised by the PSI by completing the TCQR process. Once a person has had their qualification recognised, they subsequently may make an application to register as a pharmacist in Ireland.

Access to the Register of Pharmacists by holding pharmacist qualifications obtained in a Third Country (other than Great Britain or Northern Ireland) is therefore a **two-part process (Part A - Qualification Recognition and Part B - Registration in the Register of Pharmacists)** as follows:

Part A: Qualification Recognition

The applicant's qualification must be recognised as one which is "appropriate for practice" in accordance with Section 16 of the Pharmacy Act, 2007. This is the Act that regulates the practice and profession of pharmacy in Ireland.

Part B: Registration in the Register of Pharmacists

The applicant applies to register as a pharmacist in the Register of Pharmacists in accordance with the criteria specified in Section 14 of the Pharmacy Act 2007.

This information booklet attempts to set out for you the various stages of the process. This document is not a legal interpretation of the legislative provisions in place and is intended solely as a guide to applicants considering submitting an application for recognition through the process outlined.

Applicant Eligibility Criteria

To meet the minimum standard of education and training under the TCQR process, the applicant should have completed a primary qualification which was a minimum of a **5-year bachelor's degree program**.

This 5-year program must have included at least 6 months practical internship training in the area of **community and/or hospital pharmacy only**. Practical internship training undertaken in any other sector, such as industry, academia, regulatory cannot be considered in respect of meeting the minimum six month training component.

Any practical internship training must have been required to be undertaken **as part of the degree program** and prior to the applicant being entitled to register as a pharmacist and prior to being eligible to practise as a pharmacist in an independent and unsupervised capacity.

The structure of the degree program undertaken should be as per one of the following formats:

- 4 years academic + 1-year practical training, or;
- 4 ½ years academic + 6 months practical training, or;
- 5 year integrated academic and practical training (the integrated training must add up to at least 6 months).

It is important to note that any post primary qualification cannot be taken into account as part of the eligibility criteria for the structure of the 5-year minimum degree program.

Stage 1: Submitting a valid application

APPLICATION & FEE

Applicants must submit a completed application pack and the non-refundable application fee (currently set as €1500).

Formal application documents should be submitted via email to noneuroute@psi.ie or via post to PSI House, Fenian Street, Dublin 2, D02 TD72

LIST OF DOCUMENTATION TO BE SUBMITTED BY YOU

Application for recognition of a Third Country Pharmacist Qualification as a Qualification Appropriate for Practice in Ireland Form

You are required to complete this form by:

- writing clearly in black ink
- providing a legible email address
- completing ALL applicable sections of the application

Fee

The Recognition of a Third Country Pharmacist Qualification as a Qualification Appropriate for Practice in Ireland fee is €1500, which is required to be submitted at the time of application.

The fee is generally non-refundable, and applications will not be progressed if the fee is not submitted at the time of application. The application fee should be paid via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to the PSI bank account.

Certificate Identity Form

The counter signatory on this form must be a registered legal or healthcare professional. He/she must complete the relevant details required and sign as required.

Copy of Birth Certificate

Marriage Certificate (if applicable).

You will, in general, be registered in the name that appears on your Birth Certificate or Passport. If you wish to be registered under your married name, you must submit a marriage certificate.

Full Copy of Passport (please note ALL pages of passport should be scanned)

Statutory Declaration Form

You must complete the Statutory Declaration Form. This is a solemn declaration for the purposes of Irish law. Under the Statutory Declarations Act 1938 anyone, who wilfully makes any statutory declaration, knowing the same to be untrue in any material particular, shall be guilty of an offence.

By swearing this declaration, you are making a legal declaration that:

- You are the person to whom the application and the various certificates and documents presented as part of your application refers to.
- Any facts, dates and circumstances set out in the application or in the relevant certificates and documents presented are, to the best of your knowledge, true and accurate.
- The certificates and documents concerned, where presented in copy form are true and accurate copies of the originals.

Statutory declaration forms must be sworn in the Republic of Ireland, and witnessed by either a Peace Commissioner, a practising Solicitor, or a Commissioner for Oaths. Statutory declaration forms sworn in any other jurisdiction will not be accepted. Applicants who are making their application from overseas may have the statutory declaration form completed at their nearest Irish Embassy or Consulate.

Curriculum Vitae

A copy of your full Curriculum Vitae containing at least the following information:

- Details of your qualification as a pharmacist, place of study, programme duration, practical training etc.
- Details of any other courses/programmes of education and training undertaken
- Details of ALL work experience to date (including all periods of in-service/vocational training in a pharmacy)
- ALL current and previous employments to date (including those not connected with the practice of pharmacy)

LIST OF DOCUMENTATION TO BE SUBMITTED DIRECTLY TO THE PSI FROM A THIRD PARTY

Evidence of Qualification

Certificates of Confirmation of Qualification/Professional Status from country where your primary qualification was obtained

A certificate of confirmation of qualification from the relevant authority in the country in which your qualification as a pharmacist was obtained, certifying that you hold the qualification of a pharmacist and that you are lawfully entitled to practise as a pharmacist in that country.

The relevant regulatory authority must independently certify:

- That you have undergone a programme of education and training in that country,
- The authority should also outline in detail all practical in-service/internship/pre-registration training that you undertook as part of your qualification prior to being entitled as a qualified pharmacist in an independent and unsupervised capacity,
- The scope and extent of your entitlement to practise as a pharmacist or operate a pharmacy in that country,
- Professional status

The certificate should also include:

- Your name, nationality, registration number issued by the regulatory authority, date of birth, registered address, and your current registration status and details of the nature of registration held (e.g., full, temporary, restricted, suspended, etc.).

Only **originals** of Certificates of Confirmation of Qualification will be accepted and **must be received directly by the PSI from each competent authority. Certificates received from applicants directly**

will not be accepted. We will accept Certificates via email directly from the competent authority to the PSI at noneuroute@psi.ie. On receipt the PSI must be satisfied with the authenticity of the sender. It must come from an official formal email address of the competent authority.

It is your responsibility to request the Certificate of Confirmation of Qualification in sufficient time from the relevant competent authority. Certificates of Confirmation of Qualification will be considered valid for 3 months from the date of issue or such other shorter period as may be specified in the certificate. If the certificates expire during the process, you may be required to have new valid certificates issued by the relevant authority.

if you are currently not registered in that country, you will be required to have the relevant authority certify that you are eligible to be registered/practise as a pharmacist in that country were you to apply, and that no adverse information is held by the authority regarding your entitlement to practise as a pharmacist or operate a pharmacy were you to make such an application.

Certificates of Confirmation of Qualification – From Any other Country that you have practised as a pharmacist (if applicable)

You are also required to have relevant authorities submit certificates of confirmation of registration and good standing in respect of all or any countries in which you are or were ever registered and entitled to practice as a pharmacist.

Only **originals** of Certificates of Confirmation of Qualification will be accepted and **must be received directly by the PSI from each competent authority. Certificates received from applicants directly will not be accepted.**

It may take some time for the relevant competent authorities and academic institutions to issue certificates, therefore applicants are advised to contact the relevant competent authorities at the earliest possible date to request

Academic Transcript

An original and full academic transcript of the results of the examinations which led to the award of your pharmacy qualification issued and certified by the awarding institution. (This might include your undergraduate results and/or any pre-qualification results).

Syllabus

An original syllabus in respect of your programme of education and training that led to the award of your qualification as a pharmacist issued and certified by the education institution at which you undertook any such programmes of education and training. Please note this should be the syllabus undertaken by you at the time you undertook your pharmacy studies, and not the current syllabus as it may have changed since you undertook your course of study.

The syllabus should contain as much relevant detail as possible, such as, subjects studied, grading structure; module outlines; hours allocated to lectures; tutorials; practical laboratory sessions etc. forms of assessment and reading lists. If all the required detail is not included in the syllabus provided, the assessment of your qualification may be delayed, and further information may be sought. You are asked to advise the university or institution to note your name on the syllabus, otherwise, the PSI may request to have the syllabi re-issued in your name.

- On receipt of a formal application, a preliminary review is undertaken, and the applicant will be advised of the status of their application.
- Following the preliminary review and once the application is complete, the qualification is independently assessed by the Qualification Assessment Panel (QAP) to determine that the qualification does indeed respects the minimum education and training conditions laid down in Article 44 of Professional Qualifications Directive 2005/36/EC, which are as follows:
 1. Course of training to become a pharmacist must be of at least five years' duration in total*
 2. Course of training must include at least six months' full time practical internship training in a community or hospital pharmacy**
 3. Course of study must include least four years' full time academic training in a higher-education institute (university or equivalent)
 4. Course must be structured to ensure the balance between theoretical and practical training for each subject gives sufficient importance to theory to maintain university character of the training
 5. Course must contain mandatory subjects as reference in Annex V 5.6.1 of Directive 2005/36/EC.

*Please note it is the primary qualification that allows an individual to act as a pharmacist in his/her home state which is assessed; "extra" or "top-up" educational qualifications will not be looked at in this assessment.

**The period of practical internship training is required to be undertaken on a full-time basis for a minimum of six months in a community and/or hospital pharmacy setting as part of the structured training course, and this must be independently confirmed by a Competent Authority, Regulatory Authority or University.

- If, on review, the QAP deems that the qualification does not meet the minimum conditions of education and training, the application will not be progressed further. The application file will be closed, and the application documents will be returned
- Please note if any additional information is required by the QAP, you will be informed via email and are advised to request your university to provide the additional information or clarification as quickly as possible.
- If after evaluating the qualification held it is deemed acceptable in relation to the conditions required, an applicant moves on to stage 2.

Stage 2: Equivalence Examination

- Applicants are issued with a '**Confirmation of Eligibility**' letter stating they are entitled to sit the Equivalence Exam. The Confirmation of Eligibility letter **must** be received by you, prior to applying to undertake the examination and you must present this letter to the Institute providing the examination on the day of the examination.
- The purpose of the Equivalence Examination is to assess the standard of training, education, examinations, and qualifications undertaken by the applicant to ascertain that the standard of the applicant is not of a standard lower than that which an Irish/EU/EEA applicant must achieve in conformity with the prescribed EU Minimum Training Requirements, and the standard necessary for practice in Ireland.
- Eligible applicants will be contacted via email once the subsequent date of the Equivalence Examination is available. You will be required to complete an Equivalence Examination Application form and submit this in order to secure a place on an equivalence exam.
- Once you have been advised that a place has been allocated to you, this will be confirmed via email and further information regarding the exam will be provided at that point.
- Currently the Equivalence Examination format is an online virtual examination, run over two days facilitated by an external provider on behalf of the PSI.
- The outcome of this examination, along with the content of a portfolio compiled by the applicant giving information about any post qualification education, training, and experience as a pharmacist, including continuing professional development is assessed to determine if any deficiencies exist and if they may be compensated for by the portfolio.
- An assessment of the results achieved and your performance in the Equivalence Examinations together with the portfolio will be carried out by a Panel of Independent Assessors (PIA) and they will make a recommendation for each applicant regarding the next steps.
- There are three possible outcomes following the Equivalence Examination which are briefly summarised below:
 - Your performance may be such that your qualification may be recognised as being of a standard not lower than the standard of the qualification necessary for practice in the State and you may then progress directly to stage 4, and be invited to sit and pass the Professional Registration Exam of the PSI (i.e., you will not be required to undergo an adaptation period);
OR
 - Your performance may be such that there is a doubt that your qualification is not of a standard lower than that of the standard of the qualification necessary for practice in the State. You will be required to complete an adaptation period. This adaptation period can range from a minimum of 6 months to a maximum of 3 years depending on the level of deficiencies identified by the PIA in their assessment of your examination results and portfolio.
OR
 - Your performance may be such that your qualification is deemed to be of a standard lower than the standard of the qualification necessary for practice in the State and even if you were to undertake the maximum period of adaptation the deficiencies arising could not be mitigated. Your qualification will not be recognised, and you will not be permitted to proceed any further in the process

- The recommendations of the Panel are then submitted to the Registrar who will review the recommendations and confirm approval of the outcome for each applicant.
- If an applicant is not satisfied with the outcome they receive, there is an appeals process. Please note if applicants wish to request an opportunity to re-sit the equivalence examination, they must submit an appeal requesting this. Applicants may only sit the examination twice in respect of one application procedure.
- On completion of the equivalence examination, the applicant then proceeds to stage 3 or stage 4 as applicable.

Stage 3: Adaptation Period

- The purpose of the adaptation period ensures that in cases where a doubt exists in respect of the qualification held due to deficiencies identified at stage 2 (which have not been compensated for) that an applicant acquires any competencies which appear to be deficient, and which are necessary to practice safely as a pharmacist in the State.
- This period of adaptation is carried out in a manner directed by PSI under the guidance and supervision of a tutor pharmacist and must be completed within the length of time of the adaptation period assigned plus three years.
- The Adaptation Period can only be undertaken in a hospital or community pharmacy setting and must be carried out under the supervision of an approved tutor pharmacist at an approved training establishment.
- The PSI will recognise adaptation Periods in blocks of 6 months.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to source a training placement in which the adaptation period will be carried out. This placement must be approved by the PSI prior to the commencement of the adaptation period and must do this by submitting an 'Application for Approval of Adaptation Period Training Placement Form' and a 'Statutory Declaration Form' to the PSI.
- On receipt of the completed forms, as soon as possible thereafter the PSI will contact you to advise of the approval status of the training placement.
- The approved tutor pharmacist must sign off on successful completion of the adaptation period for the applicant and must certify that you have reached a sufficient standard of competency.
- If during the adaptation period you have not performed to the required standard and competencies, then a further period of training may be required.
- On successful completion of the full adaptation period required, the applicant may proceed to stage 4.

Stage 4: Professional Registration Examination

- Applicants who successfully complete the adaptation period are then eligible to proceed to stage 4 of the process and undertake the PSI Professional Registration Examination (PRE)
- The overall purpose of the PRE is to finally assess and confirm that the applicant possesses the knowledge, skills and competencies appropriate for practice as a pharmacist in Ireland.
- Applicants must pass the PRE within 3 years of successfully completing the adaptation period or from the date of notification that no period of adaptation is necessary.
- The PRE is currently outsourced and facilitated by a third-party provider who determine the dates of the exam each year. There are usually two sittings per year.
- Details on applying to sit this examination will be provided to eligible applicants in advance of any PRE and they will be required to formally apply to confirm their place on any exam.
- Following receipt of the application form, applicants' details will be provided to the exam provider who will subsequently contact all eligible applicants with further information, logistics etc in advance of the exam.
- The result of the PRE is issued by PSI to applicants once received from the third-party provider. If the applicant has passed the exam, they are then deemed to have successfully completed the TCQR process and are eligible to make an application for registration as a pharmacist in Ireland
- Such applicants are issued with a 'Certificate confirming they have a qualification appropriate for practice in Ireland' and advised how to make an application for registration via the PSI's online portal under the First Time Registration – Non-National Route

Part B - Registration

- Having obtained such a certificate an applicant may then (and only then) apply to be registered as a pharmacist.
- All persons who are not nationals of a relevant state will be required to satisfy a language competency requirement at the point of registration. Information regarding accepted language competency criteria can be found on the PSI website [here](#)
- Registration as a pharmacist is a separate process. Information on the registration process operated by the PSI is available at www.thepsi.ie.

Important Information

- It is **YOUR** responsibility to ensure that documents are submitted correctly, in full and in a timely fashion. Documentation received that is found to be incomplete or completed incorrectly may be returned to you
- If any queries arise regarding the application documents, you will be contacted by email in the first instance to seek additional information or clarification. Please note the PSI reserves the right to make any enquiries or checks it deems necessary to verify the authenticity or otherwise of any documents furnished in support of an application directly with a third party.
- If following receipt of an initial application, all required supporting documentation has not been received within 6 months, the application may be deemed to be invalid, and the application file closed, and documentation returned to the applicant. Exceptions may be made in limited cases where the applicant informs the PSI of a valid reason why all documents have not been received within 6 months of the initial application being received.
- If incomplete or insufficient information is provided on certificates/documentation, it may be necessary for the PSI to seek further information and clarification from the relevant authority. Incorrect certificates /documentation with errors or omissions may not be accepted and required to be re-issued. It is the applicant's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authority for the re-issuance of the certificates/documents.
- All documentation must be submitted in English or Irish. If any document or certificate you provide is not in the English [or Irish] language(s) you must provide a certified translation. The translation must be carried out by a registered and authorised translator.
- If there are variations in your name, within or between the documents provided by you, or on your behalf, you should contact the PSI for further guidance prior to submitting your application. The PSI may need verification and you may be asked to produce evidential documents such as marriage certificate(s), deeds poll etc.. You may also be asked to provide a declaration sworn before a solicitor practising in the Republic of Ireland, of these variations.
- The PSI does not engage in pre-assessing any set of individual circumstances prior to receiving a formal application for recognition. It is the responsibility of each individual to review their own individual circumstances and to be sure that the qualification they have obtained meets the minimum education and training conditions required for recognition.
- On receipt of an application for qualification recognition, the PSI can only assess the individual qualification obtained which allows an individual practice as a pharmacist in their home state. This is the primary qualification that was obtained which led to the award of pharmacist and entitlement to practise as a pharmacist in an independent and unsupervised capacity in the home state. Any additional post initial qualification, education or training is not eligible to be considered for the purposes of meeting of the minimum education and training conditions.
- The equivalence examination (stage 2) and the Professional Registration Examination (stage 4) are conducted in English, and while the PSI does not require an applicant to provide evidence of competency of English at qualification recognition stage, any applicant who does not have a proficient level of the English language is advised to address this deficit prior to considering making an application as this could significantly impact on performance and ability to demonstrate their knowledge in the examinations and also during the adaptation period.

Immigration Queries

- The PSI is NOT the relevant agency with responsibility or authority to deal with matters pertaining to immigration, visas, work permits etc.
- These matters are a separate regulatory process that is dealt with by the Department of Justice through their Irish Naturalisation & Immigration Services at www.irishimmigration.ie
- Hence any queries in relation to these matters should not be directed to the PSI as we do not have the remit to advise. Such queries should be directed to the relevant authorities.
- Applicants who are not currently residing in the State and who require a visa to enter Ireland at any point during the TCQR process are advised to ensure that they are eligible to obtain the appropriate Irish visa prior to applying under the TCQR process.
- By making an application to have your qualification recognised in Ireland, this does not automatically grant you with any right to gain legal entry to Ireland, take up employment in the State or to engage in any business in the State.

Legislative Basis

The Pharmacy Act 2007 as amended (No 20 of 2007) - www.irishstatutebook.ie

Persons are entitled to be registered as pharmacists in Ireland if they meet a number of criteria. These criteria are set out in Sections 14 and 16 of the Pharmacy Act 2007 (the Act).

One of those criteria is that the person must hold *“a qualification appropriate for practice in the State”*. In the case of persons from Third Countries, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) is obliged to satisfy itself that a person’s education, training and qualifications are of a standard NOT LOWER than the standard of those necessary to practice in Ireland.

The term *“qualification appropriate for practice”* is specifically referred to in both the Pharmacy Act 2007 as amended and the PSI (Registration) Rules 2008.

PSI (Registration) Rules 2008 (SI No 494 of 2008) - www.irishstatutebook.ie

The Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, in accordance with the function conferred upon it by Section 11 of the Pharmacy Act 2007 as amended, made the PSI (Registration) Rules 2008. These rules set out the procedures for the recognition of third country qualifications in pharmacy as qualifications appropriate for practice in Ireland.

These rules stipulate that the qualification obtained in a Third Country must respect the minimum training conditions laid down in Article 44 of Professional Qualifications Directive 2005/36/EC - www.ec.europa.eu

Communicating with PSI

Application for recognition of a pharmacy qualification is a formal process and applicants must engage directly with the PSI. The PSI cannot discuss your application with third parties, except in exceptional circumstances where you require legal representation.

PSI Website	<p>The PSI's web address is www.psi.ie</p> <p>The Registration Section of the PSI's website is used to provide updated information regarding the Recognition Process. The PSI reserves the right to amend the process as necessary from time to time. Any such changes will be notified on the PSI's website.</p>
Email	<p>The recommended way of contacting the PSI is by email. Please email noneuroute@psi.ie in relation to the Third Country Qualification Recognition process</p>
Telephone Queries	<p>Contact can be made by phoning the PSI at <u>(01) 218 4006</u> and your query will be replied to in due course. Priority will be given to those queries which are not already addressed in material provided or accessible on the PSI website.</p>

Submitting an application

You can submit your application for Third Country Qualification Recognition in the following ways:

By Email	<p>Email noneuroute@psi.ie attaching your application documents as PDF attachments.</p> <p>We will accept third party documents via email to noneuroute@psi.ie , once we are satisfied with the authenticity of the sender on receipt. Third party documents from universities and competent authorities must be issued from a formal official email address (emails from personal accounts, such as gmail/Hotmail etc will not be accepted)</p>
By Post	<p>If submitting an application by post, application documents should be posted or couriered to:</p> <p>Third Country Qualification Recognition Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland PSI House Fenian Street Dublin 2 D02 TD72 Ireland</p>