

THE PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND



Recognition of Third Country Pharmacist Qualification as a
Qualification as appropriate for practice in Ireland
(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))

INFORMATION & EXPLANATORY BOOKLET

(02.2010 Edition)

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Information & Query Handling

Further information regarding recognition of pharmacy qualifications and the various stages of the registration process can be obtained from the Education & Registration Unit of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI). However, you are advised to **read this document fully and carefully** before contacting the PSI with queries.

Contact can be made as follows:

Email: thirdcountryquals@pharmaceuticalsociety.ie

The recommended way of requesting information or submitting queries is via email, the PSI will also generally contact you by email, where necessary.

Website: www.pharmaceuticalsociety.ie

You should check the PSI's website on a regular basis for updated information regarding the recognition of Third Country pharmacist qualifications. The PSI reserves the right to change dates and recognition requirements, as necessary from time to time. Any such changes will be notified on the PSI's website.

Telephone: +353-1- 218 4000

Communication with Third Parties regarding Applications for Recognition of Pharmacy Qualifications:

Application for recognition of a pharmacy qualification is a formal process that **you** personally must engage in with the PSI as the regulator of pharmacists and pharmacies in Ireland. Third parties, purporting to act as your representative, (e.g. family members, friends, employers, agencies etc) should not attempt to engage with the PSI on your behalf. You must deal with the PSI yourself regarding your application. The PSI will not discuss your application with third parties, except in circumstances where you require legal representation.

Important Information

The Relevant Rules referred to in this booklet can be viewed on the PSI website at; follows:http://www.pharmaceuticalsociety.ie/Pharmacy_Act_2007/Pharmacy_Act_2007/Statutory_Rules.html

Please note that we are not in a position to always respond to queries that you may have regarding your application or the overall process in the interim. However, we will endeavour to respond to any queries you may have when updating you on the status of your application.

Applicants who are not currently resident in the State and who require a visa must ensure that they obtain a valid Irish visa prior to travelling to Ireland. The PSI is **not** the relevant agency which deals with matters of immigration, visa's etc. This is a separate regulatory process that is dealt with by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform through their Irish Naturalisation & Immigration Services (INIS).

Also please note that these arrangements do not grant any right to take up employment in the State or to engage in any business in the State. These are separate regulatory processes that are dealt with by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in respect of employment permits and the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform through the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS). Further information on visas can be obtained from the Irish Naturalisation & Immigration Services (INIS) at the following link: http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/Irish%20Visa%20Information*

1. Introduction & Summary

- 1.1 The law in this area is relatively complex. This information booklet attempts to set out for you the various stages of the process. It is not a legal document.
- 1.2 In this booklet and in the accompanying documentation the expression “Third Country” is used. In very simple terms “Third Country” means all countries other than Ireland and countries which are members of the European Union or part of the European Economic Area.
- 1.3 People from Third Countries are entitled to be registered as pharmacists in Ireland if they meet a number of criteria. These criteria are set out in Section 14 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), (so as to determine whether their qualification is “a Qualification appropriate for Practice in the State”) is obliged by virtue of Section 16 (2) (b) of the Pharmacy Act 2007 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.
- 1.4 In order that PSI can determine whether an applicant’s Third Country qualification is a qualification appropriate for practice in Ireland a four stage process is implemented. This process may involve a number of different people, institutions and regulatory authorities and for that reason it may take some time to complete.
- 1.5 Stage 1 of the process is that the PSI must be satisfied that an applicant’s qualification “respects” the minimum training conditions laid down in Article 44 of EU Directive 2005/36/EC (the Professional Qualifications Directive). If the qualifications do not respect these minimum training conditions then the other stages of the process will not generally be embarked upon. The directive can be accessed at: <http://eur-ex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2005:255:0022:01:EN:HTML>

The prescribed minimum education and training conditions for a qualification as a pharmacist are that the applicant has completed a 5 year course of studies in total, which must comprise of at least the following:

- A minimum of 4 years of full-time theoretical and practical training at a university or relevant institution.
 - A minimum of 6 months practical training in a community pharmacy that is open to the public or a hospital pharmacy and must have taken place towards the end of the 5 year course. This training must have been undertaken as part of your pharmacist qualification course and prior to you becoming entitled to practice as a pharmacist in an independent and unsupervised capacity.
- 1.6 Please note that it is the responsibility of the applicant to be sure their qualification meets the minimum conditions as outlined above. The PSI cannot engage in pre-determining or pre-empting an outcome of validity or invalidity prior to receiving a formal application.
- 1.7 If an application is submitted and subsequently, the qualification is deemed not to meet the minimum conditions of education and training, the application will not be progressed and will be deemed to be invalid and the application documents will be returned to the applicant. However, please note that the **APPLICATION FEE IS NON-REFUNDABLE** due to qualification invalid and the application fee will NOT be returned. This is the case no matter at what stage in the process an application is deemed invalid.

- 1.8 Stage 2 of the process requires the applicant to sit an “Equivalence Examination”. The purpose of this examination is so that the PSI can identify and assess whether there are areas of an applicant’s training, education and qualifications which are of a standard that is lower than the standard necessary for practice in the State. When these shortcomings (if any) have been identified and assessed, an applicant will then pass on to stage three of the process. If there are no shortcomings identified, an applicant may proceed directly to Stage 4 of the process.
- 1.9 Stage 3 of the process requires an applicant to complete a period of adaptation (of not less than six months duration) during which an applicant makes up any deficiencies which have been identified during the course of the Equivalence Exam. The adaptation period ensures that an applicant acquires the competencies 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. Upon the successful completion of the adaptation period an applicant moves on to stage four which is the final stage of the process.
- 1.10 Stage 4 of the process requires an applicant to sit and pass the Professional Registration Exam of the PSI. An applicant is allowed three years from the successful completion of their adaptation period (or where applicable, completion of the equivalence examinations) in which to sit and pass this examination.
- 1.11 When all the stages of the process have been successfully completed an applicant will be issued with a certificate confirming that their qualification is “*a qualification appropriate for practice in the State*”. Having obtained such a certificate an applicant may then (and only then) apply to be registered as a pharmacist. The registration process is a separate process with its own set of requirements.

2. STAGE 1 – (A) Submitting a Valid Application

- 2.1 To make a valid application for recognition of your qualification as a pharmacist from a Third Country, you are required to complete the appropriate application form(s), provide all relevant supporting documentation and pay an application fee.
- 2.2 It is only when ALL the documents required and the relevant application fee has been received by the PSI, and you have satisfied the requirements as outlined in this booklet, that you will be considered to have made a valid application for qualification recognition.
- 2.3 Please also note that you will in due course be required to produce the originals of all photocopied documentation.
- 2.4 Section A below (List of Documentation to be submitted by you the Applicant) contains a list of all the documentation which **you** the applicant must submit in making your application to have your qualification recognised.
- 2.5 Section B below (List of Documentation to be submitted **on behalf of you** the Applicant) contains a list of all documentation which must be received by the PSI **directly** from the relevant third party authority/body. Please note these documents will not be accepted by the PSI if submitted by you or on your behalf. They must be submitted by the relevant authority/body itself. It is your responsibility to contact the relevant authority/body and to request them to issue the required documents directly to the PSI on your behalf.
- 2.6 You are required to provide an English translation of all documentation that is submitted in a language other than English. Translations **must** be original and be certified by a professional translator acceptable to the Registrar of the PSI.
- 2.7 Please note that in order to further verify or confirm any information, you may be required to provide further additional documents/evidence as requested by the PSI.
- 2.8 Please note that it is your responsibility to ensure that all of the required documentation as set out below is submitted. It is also your responsibility to ensure that all documents are valid, in date, accurate and complete.
- 2.9 Please do not submit any additional documentation other than what is listed in Section A below, such as secondary level education qualifications or certificates or certificates from post-qualification course attended, references etc. Such further documentation relating to further education and training may be requested to be provided at a later stage in the process.

Section A - List of Documentation to be submitted by the Applicant

- **Appropriate Application Form:** *A fully and correctly completed PSI application for Recognition of a Third Country Pharmacist Qualification Appropriate for Practice in Ireland form signed and dated by you.*
- **4 x Passport sized photographs & Certificate of Identity Form:** *four recent colour passport sized photographs of the applicant, taken within last 12 months, along with Certificate of Identity Form completed by you and a legal or healthcare professional*
- **A photocopy of your birth certificate.**
- **A photocopy of ALL pages of your current passport.**
- **Where applicable, a photocopy of your marriage certificate.** This is required in cases where you wish to undergo the qualification recognition process in your married name.
- **The original and fully completed Statutory Declaration Form.**

This is a solemn declaration for the purposes of Irish law. Under the Statutory Declarations Act 1938 (as amended), any applicant who wilfully makes any statutory declaration, knowing the same to be untrue in any material particular, shall be guilty of a criminal offence, punishable by fine and/or imprisonment.

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.

The Statutory Declaration Form must be completed in the Republic of Ireland and must be signed **in the presence of** one of the following;

- A peace commissioner
- A practising solicitor
- A commissioner for oaths
- A notary public

For contact details of the above such persons, please refer to the following websites:

- Golden Pages at www.goldenpages.ie (search by category and location)
- OASIS (Citizens Information Online) at www.oasis.gov.ie
- The Law Society of Ireland at www.lawsociety.ie
- The Faculty of Notaries Public in Ireland at www.notarypublic.ie

Please note:

When for practical reasons, it is not possible to submit the prescribed Statutory Declaration with the required application documentation; the PSI will accept the application subject to the Statutory Declaration to be submitted at a later date but not later than attendance at the documentation verification meeting.

- **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, period and nature of your 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).

- **A certified copies of your qualification as a pharmacist, as follows:**

- Certificate of qualification awarded by the relevant education institute (e.g. in most cases this would be the B.Sc. Pharm. degree cert)
- Certificate of registration as a pharmacist/ Licence Certificate by relevant regulatory/competent authority from the country where you obtained your pharmacy qualification.

Please note the above documents should be certified by a Solicitor.

- **The application fee of €1500.**

Please note:

This fee is **FULLY NON-REFUNDABLE**. Please note that the application fee is non-refundable and the application fee will NOT be refunded in whole or in part if your application does not progress past any stage of the process.

Payments may be made by bank draft, postal money order, credit card (Visa or MasterCard only) or debit card and are payable in Euros.

For applicants paying from outside of the Republic of Ireland, payment methods accepted are credit card (Visa or MasterCard only) or by Euro bank draft.

Bank drafts and postal orders must be made payable to the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. (Please use the Fee Payment page at the back of the application form).

Applications received with no application fee enclosed, will not be accepted or processed and deemed invalid upon receipt. Such applications and all supporting documents received by the applicant will be returned immediately by post to the applicant.

Section B - List of Documentation to be submitted directly to the PSI from a third party in support of your application

- **Evidence of Qualification as a Pharmacist**

A certification 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 without restriction.

The relevant regulatory authority must also independently certify:

- That you have undergone a programme of education and training in that country.
- The authority should also outline all practical in-service/internship/pre-registration training that you undertook as part of your qualification prior to being entitled to practice 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 the following details;

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

Please note:

If you are not currently 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 also that no adverse information is held by that authority regarding your entitlement to practise as a pharmacist or operate a pharmacy were you to make such an application.

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.

- **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 should 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. The syllabus should contain as much detail as possible. Please note that information on all years of the degree must be provided even if year 1 is a shared basic sciences year. The following information/details should be included also:

- subjects studied
- grading structure
- module outlines
- hours allocated to lectures, tutorials, practical's, laboratory sessions etc.
- forms of assessment;
- reading lists

Please note:

If all the required detail is not included in the syllabus provided, the QAP may not be able to approve the qualification and would require the university to provide further detail, information and clarification as outlined by them. This may obviously delay the progressing of your application.

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.

As the PSI often receives syllabi with no applicants name on it and therefore do not know on whose behalf it has been issued, please advise the institution to note on the syllabus on whose behalf the syllabus is being issued. Otherwise, the PSI may request you to have the syllabi re-issued in your name.

Important Information regarding Co-ordination of Applications

It is your responsibility to ensure that documents are submitted correctly, in full and in a timely fashion. It is also your responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities or educational institutions in the country in which you obtained your pharmacist qualification, in order to have the relevant documentation in Section B above issued directly to the PSI in support of your application.

Please note that it is not possible for the PSI to recognize and/or register persons who are unable to produce the necessary documentation, including confirmatory certificates, academic transcripts of syllabi from third parties as required by the Registration Rules. The PSI has no right or flexibility to waive receipt of any required documentation.

A copy of the relevant rules can be accessed at

http://www.pharmaceuticalsociety.ie/Pharmacy_Act_2007/upload/File/Statutory_Rules/Registration_Rules_CK_031208.pdf

In particular as outlined in Section 4, 10(b) of these rules

If following receipt of an initial application, all required support documentation has not been received within 6 months, the application will be deemed to be invalid and all documentation will be returned to you. Please note exceptions may be made in cases where the applicant informs the PSI a valid reason why all documents have not been received within 6 months of the initial application being received.

3. STAGE 1 – (B) Qualification Assessment

- 3.1 Once your application is found to be complete, subject to the verification of original documents (see Stage 1), you will then be notified of this via email and informed that your application can now proceed to be assessed in consultation with the Qualification Assessment Panel (QAP)*.
- 3.2 Your application will be submitted to the QAP.
- 3.3 The purpose of the QAP's review is to ascertain whether the qualification held by you is a pharmacist qualification and also to assess, on the face of it, the standard of that qualification.
- 3.4 If any additional information is required by the QAP, you will be informed via email and are advised to provide the additional information or clarification as quickly as possible.
- 3.5 If following their assessment, the QAP are in any doubt regarding the standard of your pharmacist qualification, they may require you to have your third country qualification independently certified by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), as being equivalent to at least an Irish Honours Bachelor Degree which is equivalent to National Qualifications Framework Level 8. You will be provided with further information on how to go about this if required, at that time.
- 3.6 If it is found that, on the face of it, your qualification is indeed a qualification as a pharmacist that appears to meet the minimum education and training requirements specified in Article 44 of EU Directive 2005/36/EC, it will be recommended that you may proceed to the next stage in the Qualification Recognition process which is the Equivalence Examination.
- 3.7 Prior to undertaking the Equivalence Examination (see Stage 2) you will be required to attend a meeting with designated representatives of the PSI. At this meeting, you will be required to present the **originals** of all documentation submitted by you as part of your initial application.
- 3.8 Following this meeting, once everything is found to be in order; you will be issued with a letter by the PSI informing you of your entitlement to sit the Equivalence Examination. You must sit the Equivalence Examination within 12 months of the date of issue of this letter.

**The QAP is a panel of experts in undergraduate pharmacy programme development and delivery, who are academics from across the Irish schools of pharmacy. Experts will be appointed to this Panel by the Professional Learning & Development Committee of the PSI Council for the purpose of assessing if a qualification is a pharmacy qualification and the considered level of the qualification on National Qualifications Framework.*

4. STAGE 2 – Equivalence Examination

- 4.1 The Equivalence Examination is a set of examinations which are designed to independently assess the standard of training, education, examinations and qualifications obtained by you and to ascertain that the standard achieved is not of a standard lower than that which an Irish/EU/EEA applicant would achieve in meeting with the prescribed EU Minimum Training Requirements.
- 4.2 A letter informing you of your entitlement to undertake the Equivalence Examination **must** be received by the applicant, prior to applying to undertake the examination and this letter is required to be presented to the institute providing the examination.
- 4.3 The dates of the Equivalence Examinations will be posted on the PSI website as and when they are scheduled and confirmed.
- 4.4 If you are required to undertake the Equivalence Examination, you will be issued with all necessary information regarding the examinations at that time. These will include how to apply to undertake the examination and the examination format. Preparatory materials will also be made available in due course.
- 4.5 Following the Equivalence Examinations, an assessment of your results of the exam along with, inter alia, your training and practical experience as a pharmacist to date will be carried out in order to determine the requirement for and the duration of the adaptation period to be completed. A minimum period of at least 6 months is generally required to be undertaken.

5. STAGE 3 – Completion of an Adaptation Period

- 5.1 The overall purpose of the adaptation period is to ensure that applicants gain the competencies required to practise safely as an independent and professional pharmacist and also to gain the knowledge and skills required to exercise the independent legal, professional and ethical responsibilities of a pharmacist in Ireland.
- 5.2 You will be notified by the PSI of the outcome of the assessment and advised as to the length of the adaptation period required to be undertaken by you. At this time, you will also be advised of how to go about obtaining an appropriate placement. Please note that if you do not appear to have obtained the required competencies from the recommended initial period of adaptation, you may be required to undergo a further adaptation period in order to do so.
- 5.3 The PSI may advise you to undergo an English Language Competency test prior to commencing an adaptation period. This will be required if it appears that your linguistic ability in English is such that it may be difficult for you to benefit from an adaptation period. If you are requested to undergo such a test, the PSI will advise you of this prior to undergoing an adaptation period. All relevant information as to where and how to go about such a test will be provided at that time.
- 5.4 Please note that your performance during the adaptation period shall be assessed by the PSI with the aim of assessing your ability to pursue the profession a pharmacist under a defined competency framework.
- 5.5 The PSI does not provide placements for the adaptation period. The applicant must source the placement themselves.
- 5.3 Once a adaptation period placement has been sourced, the applicant must apply to the PSI for the approval of the placement before the adaptation period may commence. Eligible applicants will be provided with details of the approval process further to the outcome of the approval of the individual recommended adaptation periods.

6. STAGE 4 – PSI Professional Registration Examination

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 The overall purpose of the Professional Registration Examination is to finally assess and confirm that the examinee possess the knowledge, skills and competencies appropriate for practice as a pharmacist in Ireland.
- 6.3 Applicants must pass the Professional Registration Examination within 3 years of his or her successful completion of their adaptation period or if being notified that no period of adaptation is necessary.
- 6.4 Procedures, requirements and rules which apply to the PSI Professional Registration Examination are identical to those which apply to the national pharmacy graduates.
- 6.5 Further details on applying to sit this examination will be provided to eligible applicants at the appropriate time.
- 6.6 Upon successful completion of Stage 4, applicants will be issued with a certificate confirming that he/she holds a qualification appropriate for practice in the State.