



[Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy](#)

Providing services including those of a qualified professional if there's no Brexit deal

Recognition of professional qualifications

Before 29 March 2019

The Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (MRPQ) Directive provides a reciprocal framework of rules which enables EEA and Swiss nationals to have their professional qualifications recognised in a state other than the one in which the qualification was obtained. In addition to the EU, the MRPQ Directive applies to Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway and to Switzerland by virtue of it being annexed to the EEA Agreement and the Agreement between the European Community and its Member States and the Swiss Confederation on the free movement of persons.

It provides several routes to recognition, including:

- automatic recognition based on minimum training conditions or professional experience (recognition based on minimum training conditions applies to: doctors, nurses, dental practitioners, veterinary surgeons, midwives, pharmacists and architects)
- the 'general system' under which, subject to certain exceptions, regulators must not refuse, on grounds of inadequate qualifications, applicants who seek to practise a regulated profession in the UK if they hold the qualifications required by an EEA State or Switzerland. In certain cases, regulators may require an applicant to complete either an aptitude test or an adaptation period before allowing the applicant to practise the regulated profession in the UK
- a mechanism for those who want to work on a temporary or occasional basis in another EEA State or Switzerland, including the role of the regulator and the procedures and formalities with which an applicant must comply

The MRPQ Directive applies in general to regulated professions unless otherwise stated in the MRPQ Directive. A non-exhaustive list of professions covered by the MRPQ Directive is available in the [European Commission's database of regulated professions](#).

The MRPQ Directive also provides rules for recognition of non-EEA and non-Swiss qualifications held by EEA or Swiss nationals.

Parts of the current version of the MRPQ Directive (Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU) have been implemented in the UK by the European Union (Recognition of Professional Qualifications) Regulations 2015 (Recognition of Professional Qualifications Regulations). Parts of an earlier version of the MRPQ Directive were originally implemented in the UK by the European Communities (Recognition of Professional Qualifications) Regulations 2007, which have since been revoked except as they apply to Switzerland.

These are supplemented by UK sector-specific legislation for certain professions.

After March 2019 if there's no deal

The MRPQ Directive will no longer apply to the UK and there will be no system of reciprocal recognition of professional qualifications between the remaining EEA states, Switzerland and the UK.

The UK will ensure that professionals arriving in the UK with EEA and Swiss qualifications after the exit date will have a means to seek recognition of their qualifications.

The government has prepared legislation to update the Recognition of Professional Qualifications Regulations. This will bring a new system into force for exit day. Parliament is currently considering this [legislation](#). There is also an [Explanatory Memorandum](#), which explains the legislation and the changes it will make to the Recognition of Professional Qualifications Regulations in more detail. This legislation will be supplemented by sector specific legislation to cover certain professions.

The proposed new system of recognition of professional qualifications will:

- Protect recognition decisions that have already made; allow applications for recognition which have been made before exit to be concluded under the same rules as far as possible; and allow individuals to complete temporary and occasional service provision which started before exit.
- Retain a general system for recognition where UK regulators will be required to recognise EEA and Swiss qualifications which are of an equivalent standard to UK qualifications in scope, content and level.
- No longer include certain obligations on regulators such as offering compensation measures, partial access and temporary and occasional provision of services. However, it will leave regulators with the discretion to decide how to treat non-equivalent EEA or Swiss qualifications.
- Correct deficiencies in the Regulation of Professional Qualifications Regulations so that the system that is being retained can still function effectively and professionals will retain a route for recognition of their professional qualification.

More detailed guidance for regulators and professionals will be published before exit day.

The UK has reached agreements with Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, and with Switzerland, to address separation issues which include specific arrangements for the recognition of professional qualifications for these countries' nationals. These agreements differ in some respects to the no deal position set out in this document. Further information will be provided on the specific provisions in due course.

The government will continue to work with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Civil Service as well as regulatory bodies to ensure the future system for the recognition of professional qualifications works across the UK. These arrangements are without prejudice to the rights and privileges accorded, by virtue of the Common Travel Area, to Irish and UK citizens when in each other's state.

Implications

There are implications for all the professions named in this notice as well as businesses.

For EEA and Swiss professionals (as well as UK nationals holding EEA or Swiss qualifications) who have received a recognition decision in the UK before exit, these recognition decisions will not be affected and will remain valid.

EEA and Swiss professionals (as well as UK nationals holding EEA or Swiss qualifications) who have applied for a recognition decision and are awaiting a decision on exit day will, as far as possible, be able to conclude their applications in line with the provisions of the MRPQ Directive.

Professionals with EEA or Swiss qualifications who have not started an application for a recognition decision in the UK before exit will be subject to the new system of recognition, subject to Parliament's approval.

UK nationals seeking recognition to work in regulated professions in the EEA or Switzerland should check the host state's policies. The European Commission has stated that decisions on the recognition of UK qualifications in EU countries before exit day are not affected and has published guidance in the Commission's Brexit Professional Qualification preparedness notice to this effect.

Actions for businesses and other stakeholders

EEA and Swiss professionals (as well as UK nationals holding EEA or Swiss qualifications) who have received a recognition decision in the UK do not need to take any action as the recognition decision will not be affected by exit.

Further guidance will be issued to provide professionals and employers with more details concerning recognition decisions pending on exit or issued after exit.

More information

In 2015, the government published [guidance for regulatory bodies of regulated professions](#). It sets out the obligations placed upon them by the MRPQ Directive. In the scenario where the UK leaves the European Union on 29 March 2019 without a formal agreement, the published guidance will be updated to reflect the changes that are made to the Recognition of Professional Qualifications Regulations.