

# General Information on the Recognition of Non-Irish Professional Qualifications in Psychology

## 1. Introduction

There is currently no system of statutory registration for psychologists in Ireland. It is expected that a system of statutory registration (for both public and private practice) of psychologists will be introduced in Ireland within the next few years when the Psychologists Registration Board of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council (CORU) opens its register. Until the introduction of statutory registration, persons are free to work in the private sector in Ireland without having their non-Irish professional qualifications recognised.

At present, persons who have obtained their professional psychology qualifications (in clinical, counselling or educational psychology) outside the Republic of Ireland must have these qualifications recognised under Directive 2005/36/EC (or under the processes of the Directive for non-EEA qualifications or EEA qualifications of non-EEA nationals) before they can practise their profession in the publicly funded health sector (HSE or HSE funded service) in Ireland.

The Minister for Health is the competent authority for the assessment of psychology qualifications for those seeking employment as a psychologist in the publicly-funded health sector and is advised in the process by the Psychological Society of Ireland (PsSI). The PsSI has established an Expert Validation Committee (EVC) to assess applications and make recommendations. The process is administered by the Validation Unit in the Department of Health on behalf of the Minister. On receiving the advice of the PsSI, the Validation Unit issue a decision letter to the applicant.

## 2. Directive 2005/36/EC

Applications for recognition of non-Irish psychology qualifications are assessed under the general system of Directive 2005/36/EC which applies to all EEA nationals<sup>1</sup> wishing to practise a regulated profession in an EEA State other than that in which they obtained their professional qualifications. Its intention is to make it easier for certain professionals to practise their professions in European countries other than their own. The processes of the Directive are also applied to qualifications which are outside the scope of the Directive (i.e. non-EEA qualifications or qualifications of non-EEA nationals).

To be eligible for consideration, you must be eligible to practise the profession in the country which awarded the professional qualification and provide documentary evidence of this.

Once you are eligible for consideration, the general system of the Directive provides for an assessment, on a case-by-case basis, of the qualifications/professional training of an applicant against that required to practise in the host country (i.e. Ireland). If the

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2005/36/EC also applies to persons eligible under Directives 2004/38/EC and 2004/83/EC.

activities covered by the profession in the home and the host country are not comparable, then the qualifications cannot be recognised. If the activities are comparable but deficits in the qualifications are identified, subsequent post-qualification supervised professional experience of the applicant must be considered. If deficits remain, the host country must offer an applicant a compensation measure i.e. the choice between an adaptation period (a placement) and an aptitude test.

### **3. Areas of Psychology**

There are 3 different specialist areas within psychology in the public health system in Ireland (Clinical, Counselling and Educational) for which there is a recognition process.

Information on the qualifications required for appointment as a psychologist to the publicly funded health sector (HSE or HSE funded service) in Ireland are available at: [Psychologists, Eligibility Criteria - HSE.ie](#). You should also consult the accreditation guidelines for the assessment of postgraduate professional programmes on the website of the Psychological Society of Ireland ([The Psychological Society of Ireland \(PSI\)](#)) so that you are fully aware of Irish requirements.

It is important that you apply for recognition in the area which most closely matches your qualifications and apply for one specialism only. A description of each specialist area is provided in **Appendix 1** to this document.

### **4. Completing the Application Form**

The application form should be completed as fully as possible and all supporting documentation submitted. Please see the separate guide to Completing the Application Form depending on the specialism being applied for i.e. clinical, counselling or educational. Please note that it is not advised to send large amounts of additional material, which is not directly relevant to the application, as it is likely to be counter-productive. Be selective when deciding what to submit. However, any evidence of Continuing Professional Development is welcomed.

#### *4.1. Qualifications*

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

#### *4.2. Training placements as part of your Postgraduate Training*

Training placements are an integral part of professional postgraduate training in Ireland. **You may not double count** training placements or periods of supervised work experience, academic courses, or research.

When the form asks for the total number of placement training or working days, please ensure that these are provided as accurately as possible e.g. 35 days, 24 January 2022 to 11 March 2022. 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, holidays, or days spent in formal academic coursework.

If a period of supervised experience included work with more than one clinical group, for example, Adult Mental Health and Lifespan Intellectual Disability, you must not count all days (or hours) under both headings. However, you may give the proportion of time assigned to each client group e.g. 40% Adult and 60% Intellectual Disability, and assign part of the period to each area.

Theoretical knowledge and study is considered to be an essential foundation before the start of practical training and/or work as a trainee psychologist. Practical experience acquired PRIOR to the commencement of professional postgraduate training CANNOT be considered. Supervised experience gained before or during an undergraduate degree cannot be counted towards professional supervised experience.

Work in another capacity such as care work, residential work, teaching, social work and so on, cannot be counted as supervised work as a professional psychologist.

#### *4.3. Supervised Professional Experience/Employment*

If deficits in the qualification are identified, subsequent supervised post-qualification professional experience will be considered. It is important that you provide complete information on all supervised clinical experience you have obtained since your professional qualification (Section E) and on your postgraduate employment as a psychologist (Section F).

### **5. Processing Time Periods**

An application will be acknowledged when received in the Validation Unit and placed in a queue for processing. In accordance with Directive 2005/36/EC, an acknowledgement of receipt of a completed application will issue no later than **one month** of an application being received in the Validation Unit. Similarly, an applicant will be informed of an incomplete application form or any missing documentation within one month of receipt of an application. Only when a complete application form, and all relevant documentation, has been received will your application be acknowledged as complete and submitted to the Expert Validation Committee (EVC) of the PsSI for expert advice.

A decision will be made on your application within **4 months** of acknowledging your complete application (6 months in the case of qualifications outside the scope of the Directive). Clarification on the detail provided in your application may be sought by the EVC during the assessment process. A period of one month is normally allowed for applicants to forward any additional information requested but this can be extended as required. In such instances, the timelines will be paused while awaiting any additional information requested from an applicant.

### **6. Scrutiny Fee**

A scrutiny fee of €500 is payable to the Psychological Society of Ireland for the expert advice provided. This fee can be paid by any of the following methods:

(i) by **cheque, postal order or bank draft** made payable to the Psychological Society of Ireland and drawn on an IRISH BANK;

(ii) by **bank transfer** using the following bank details:

Account No: 76708184, Sort Code: 93-12-25, Branch: AIB, Westmoreland Street, Dublin 2, Ireland, IBAN Code: IE67AIBK93122576708184, Swift Code: AIBKIE2D (enclose the stub of the transfer docket or evidence of this payment method with your application);

(iii) by **credit card** - enclose a note authorising payment with your full card details in the cover letter with your application.

## 7. Appeals

Regulation 83 of SI No. 8 of 2017, which transposes Directive 2005/36/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 made by him/her. If you want to appeal a decision, you may wish to consult a solicitor eligible to practise in Ireland. Such an appeal shall be brought within 42 days from the date of the notice of that decision or the expiry of the period within which the decision or acknowledgement should have been made. A decision of the High Court on an appeal under this Regulation is final and not appealable.

Please note that a formal appeal to a decision of the Competent Authority is only applicable to applications falling under the remit of the Directive. It does NOT apply to non-EEA applications.

It is also possible to lodge an informal appeal to a decision of the Competent Authority if it is felt that relevant information has not been considered. If any further relevant information is submitted within one month of receiving a decision letter, it will be considered. This informal appeal process applies to all applicants.

## 8. Correspondence

All queries on applications should be sent by email to the Validation Unit at ([validation\\_unit@health.gov.ie](mailto:validation_unit@health.gov.ie)). Queries are answered in the order in which they are received and the Validation Unit commits to responding to queries within two working days.

The Validation Unit will accept an electronic/soft copy of all applications and supporting documentation submitted in PDF format. Your application form and supporting documentation (appropriately witnessed) should be submitted as a single PDF file, if possible. Alternatively, please submit the completed application form and supporting documentation as 2 separate files. All relevant information can be sent to the above e-mail address.

A completed application and supporting documentation (appropriately witnessed) must also be submitted in hard copy, for verification purposes, at the applicant's earliest opportunity. However, the submission of applications electronically, in advance of hard copy submission, can help expedite the application process. The hard copy application should be sent by post to the *Validation Unit, Department of Health, Block 1, Miesian Plaza, 50-58 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2, D02 XW14.*

## **9. Other Relevant Information**

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.

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 Enterprise, Trade and Employment ([Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment - DETE](#)) for information on the right to work in Ireland/employment permits and the website of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service ([Home - Immigration Service Delivery \(irishimmigration.ie\)](#)) in relation to residence.

Please find the Department of Health Privacy Policy at the following link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/2f7457-department-of-healths-privacy-policy/>

*May 2022*

## **Appendix**

# **Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology: Sub-Specialty Areas of Psychology in the Health Service Executive in Ireland**

### **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.

### **Counselling Psychology**

Counselling psychology focuses on personal and interpersonal functioning across the life span and on emotional, social, vocational, educational, health-related, developmental and organisational concerns. In addition to the health services, counselling psychologists can therefore be found working in such diverse areas as schools, colleges and industrial workplaces. Counselling psychology centres on typical or normal developmental issues as well as atypical or disordered development as it applies to human experience from individual, family, group, systems and organisational perspectives. Counselling psychologists help people with physical, emotional and mental disorders improve wellbeing, alleviate distress and maladjustment, and resolve crises. In addition, practitioners in this professional specialty provide assessment, diagnosis and treatment of psychopathology.

### **Educational Psychology**

Educational psychologists work to support the psychological and educational development of persons of all ages in the education and healthcare systems. This support includes working collaboratively with these persons; where applicable with their parents, guardians or families and/or with other support professionals who work with them. The work of the educational psychologist can, therefore, involve prevention, assessment, intervention and collaborative support primarily within educational and healthcare settings. Educational psychologists are also involved in consultation, decision making and system-led service delivery. They are also likely to be involved in training, research, and policy formulation.