



Council Policy

Recognition of professional qualifications
outside the State

Title: POL002 Council policy - Recognition of professional qualifications outside the State		V-5
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Mission Statement

“The Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council protects the public by independently specifying, reviewing, maintaining and monitoring standards of excellence for the safe provision of quality pre-hospital emergency care”

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Version History

(Please visit the [PHECC website](#) to confirm current version.)

Version	Approval Date	Details
1	November 2004	New policy
2	December 2007	Policy amended
3	December 2010	Policy amended
4	January 2013	Policy amended following legal advice
5	October 2021	Policy amended following legal advice

PURPOSE

The purpose of the document is to set out the manner in which the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (“the Council”) complies with its statutory duty to consider applications for the assessment and recognition of professional qualifications obtained outside Ireland. It is the policy of the Council in providing a quality service, to ensure that all such applications are managed effectively and equitably.

SCOPE

This policy applies to applicants who have obtained a professional pre-hospital emergency care qualification outside of Ireland and wish to have those qualifications assessed and recognised in order to obtain a National Qualification in Emergency Medical Technology (NQEMT), the academic award required to register in Ireland. A pre-hospital emergency care practitioner is a person registered as an Emergency Medical Technician, Paramedic or Advanced Paramedic on the Register maintained by the Council.

Pursuant to the European Union (Recognition of Professional Qualifications) Regulations 2017 (S.I. No 8 of 2017) (“the 2017 Regulations”), PHECC is the designated competent authority for the regulated professions of Advanced Paramedic, Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedic.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. The Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council’s Establishment Order SI No 109 of 2000, (as amended by S.I. 575, and S.I. No. 166 of 2008 and S.I. No. 8 of 2017 provides that:
“4. The functions of the Council shall be to:
.....
(d) upon request, assess the equivalence of professional qualifications in pre-hospital emergency care obtained from institutions other than recognised institutions, both within and outside the State, and award the N.Q.E.M.T. as appropriate at the level of competence determined by the Council. In this regard, the Council shall comply with its obligations as competent authority for emergency medical technicians, paramedics and advanced paramedics under the general system of recognition of professional qualifications provided S.I. No. 8/2017 – European Union (Recognition of Professional Qualifications) Regulations 2017.
2. The title of Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedic can have significantly different meanings internationally in terms of scope of practice and level of professional competence. For that reason, notwithstanding the title used in the country where the applicant qualified, the Council will examine every application individually and consider if the activities covered are comparable to an equivalent Irish standard. Every application will be assessed on a case-by-case basis taking all relevant considerations into account.
3. Applicants are required to complete an Application Form available from the website.

ASSESSMENT OF AN APPLICATION

4. Applications pursuant to the Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive

The Council will assess those applications which are entitled to be considered under the Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive (2005/36/EC) and recognise the equivalence of professional qualifications in pre-hospital emergency care obtained by such applicants in the European Economic Area (EEA)¹, plus Switzerland, but not in the State, in accordance with the principles set out in the Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive (2005/36/EC). These applications will be referred to as "mutual recognition applications" and are made pursuant the 2017 Regulations.

The 2017 Regulations apply to an eligible person² -

(a) who obtained his or her professional qualification in a Member State other than the State, or

(b) whose qualifications have been issued by a state other than a Member State, where a Member State other than the State has certified that the person has three years' professional experience in the profession concerned on its territory, that Member State having recognised the evidence of formal qualifications in accordance with its rules,

and who wishes to pursue a regulated profession in the State, on either a self-employed or employed basis.

5. International Applications - Applications other than pursuant to the Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive/ the 2017 Regulations

The Council will assess all other applications and recognise the equivalence of professional qualifications in pre-hospital emergency care obtained outside the State by taking into consideration all the diplomas/certificates, evidence of formal qualifications and relevant experience of the applicant. The Council will take into consideration all the diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualifications of the person concerned and his/her relevant experience, by comparing the specialised knowledge and abilities certified by those diplomas and that experience with the knowledge and qualifications required by the national rules. Such applications will be referred to as "international applications".

¹ The countries of the EEA are as follows: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway

² Defined in the 2017 Regulations as: A national of a member State, a family member of a national of a Member State as defined in Directive 2004/38 who has been given the right of residence or permanent residence pursuant to that Directive or a person granted refugee or subsidiary protection status in the State under Council Directive 2004/83/EC or a dependent family member of such person.

PROCESS FOR ALL APPLICANTS

6. The following timelines will apply to the applications made pursuant to the Directive and also international applications:
 - PHECC will acknowledge receipt of an application within 1 month and inform the applicant of any missing documentation
 - The procedure for examining an application shall be completed as quickly as possible and, in any case result in a duly substantiated decision by PHECC within 3 months of date of submission of the completed application file
 - The time period may be extended by one month at PHECC's discretion. PHECC will normally only extend time where there is a compelling reason to do so and will advise the applicant of any extension and, where possible, the reasons for it.
7. When the application documents are received, they will be assessed by members of the qualification assessors panel (QAP). The QAP will make a recommendation in respect of each application. The QAP will assess and compare the applicant's professional qualification, education and training with corresponding education and training and scope of practice in Ireland.
8. During assessment, the applicant's knowledge, skills and competencies gained in the course of their professional experience and through lifelong learning (as defined in the 2017 Regulations) made evident in their application will be considered by the QAP.
9. The Director will consider the recommendation of the QAP and will then decide whether to approve the application. The Council will note the decision of the Director.

APPLICATION OUTCOME

10. The decision is based on the individual merits of the application and one of the following will be decided:
 - a) Mutual recognition applications:
 - i) **Application successful.** The application meets the requirements for award of the National Qualification in Emergency Medical Technology (NQEMT), at EMT, Paramedic or Advanced Paramedic level.
 - ii) **Application unsuccessful and compensation measure required.** If the application does not meet in full the requirements for award of the NQEMT, the decision will identify the manner in which the applicant failed to meet the requirements for the award of the NQEMT. Mutual recognition applicants may choose between a period of adaptation or an aptitude test in order to address the deficit identified in the decision.
 - b) International applications:
 - i) **Application successful.** The application meets the requirements for award of the National Qualification in Emergency Medical Technology (NQEMT), at EMT, Paramedic or Advanced Paramedic level.

- ii) **Application unsuccessful.** If the application does not meet in full the requirements for award of the NQEMT, the Director will identify the manner in which the applicant failed to meet the requirements for the award of the NQEMT. The Director may at his/her absolute discretion identify the additional steps the applicant needs to undertake before resubmitting an application.

APPLICATION OUTCOME - SUCCESSFUL

11. In respect of both mutual recognition and international applications, if successful or the required compensation mechanism is successfully completed, the Council/Director will award a National Qualification in Emergency Medical Technology (NQEMT) at the appropriate practitioner level. The three levels of the NQEMT are:
- NQEMT- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
 - NQEMT- Paramedic
 - NQEMT- Advanced Paramedic
12. Once in receipt of the NQEMT award, the applicant will be eligible to apply for registration at the appropriate division of the Council's Register.

APPLICATION OUTCOME - UNSUCCESSFUL

13. All unsuccessful applicants, whether mutual recognition applicants or international applicants, have the right to appeal to the Council's Appeals Panel. Such appeals shall be brought within 28 days of the date of the letter from PHECC informing of the decision which is being appealed. The document "Council Policy and Procedures for Appeals" applies and should be read in conjunction with this document.
14. Mutual recognition applicants also have a right of appeal to the High Court within 42 days from the date upon which the decision is communicated to the applicant concerned pursuant to the 2017 Regulations. **Applicants should note that the statutory 42-day time limit runs from the date of notification of the original decision of the Council, not the decision of the Council's Appeals Panel and an internal appeal does not "stop the clock" for the purposes of an appeal to the High Court. Any appeal to the High Court must be brought within 42 days of the date on which the original decision of the Council is communicated to them.**

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