

Information on the recognition of general practitioner, dentist and pharmacist qualifications

Hungary's accession to the European Union on 1st May 2004 resulted in the change of recognition procedures concerning the certificates verifying the above-mentioned qualifications. Since the day of accession, Section III of Act C of 2001 on the recognition of foreign certificates and degrees (Recognition Act) regulates the recognition of qualifications obtained in EU Member States and by EU citizens.

This means that there are two different recognition procedures concerning the holders of the above qualifications depending whether they have obtained their certificates in a Member State as an EU citizen, or in a third country outside the European Union.

A, The recognition of general practitioner, dentist and pharmacist qualifications obtained in a Member State by an EU citizen

In this case, the condition for the recognition of above qualifications is that the applicant obtained his/her qualification in one of the Member States of the European Union as a citizen of a Member State, and he/she applies for the recognition in order to be employed in Hungary.

According to the Recognition Act, the term **Member State** is applicable for an EU member state, and for another state that based on international conventions or law falls under the same jurisdiction as EU member states in respect of the mutual recognition of certificates and degrees. Such states are Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

In these cases, the above-mentioned foreign qualifications are recognised during an **automatic recognition procedure**.

The automatic recognition procedure falls within the authority of the National Directorate General for Hospitals (Országos Kórházi Főigazgatóság). Address: 1085 Budapest, 24. Horánszky Street, ground floor 010, phone: (+36-1) 919-3336, website: <https://www.enkk.hu/index.php/en/>, e-mail: recognition@okfo.gov.hu.

If someone wishes to have his/her **specialist medical or pharmacist** qualification obtained under the scope of Community law recognised, it also falls within the authority of the Office of Health Authorisation and Administrative Procedures.

The National Directorate General for Hospitals is also the competent authority in cases when a Hungarian citizen with a Hungarian qualification wishes to work as a general practitioner, a dentist or a pharmacist abroad and the foreign authority asks for a certificate about the content of the training, the duration of the professional experience or the legal effect of the qualification.

B, The recognition of general practitioner, dentist and pharmacist qualifications not falling under the scope of Community law

The recognition of qualifications that do not fall under the scope of Community law (i.e. the applicant is not a citizen of the European Union and/or has not obtained his/her degree in a Member State) belongs to the sphere of competence of the Hungarian Equivalence and Information Centre (Hungarian ENIC) within the Educational Authority. The condition for the recognition of the above qualifications is that the level of the applicant's qualification is of the same level as a Hungarian *Master degree* because in Hungary general practitioner, dentist and pharmacist trainings are completed within the framework of an undivided higher education training ending with a qualification testifying Master degree.

For the recognition of higher education certificates please read our relevant [information bulletin](#).

I. The first part of the recognition procedure

According to the Recognition Act, the competent authority may determine certain conditions for the recognition of the qualification. Based on this, the Hungarian ENIC has the authority to require the applicant to take a professional exam in order to examine whether the applicant has the skills equivalent to those obtainable in Hungarian training.

The Hungarian ENIC brings the recognition decision taking into consideration the professional opinion of a higher education expert relevant to the field of study.

The expert takes into consideration the detailed subject requirements of the foreign higher education institutions' general practitioner, dentist and pharmacist training and the applicant's professional career.

It is necessary for the assessment of the applications that the applicant submits a detailed List of Grades, an extract of the register or a certificate issued by the higher education institution which credibly certifies the duration of studies and the prescribed study requirements needed to obtain the degree.

The most essential information needed by the expert to make his/her decision is the number of subject hours, the subjects of the state exam and whether the applicant has written a thesis.

The documents containing the above data have to be submitted in certified copies and their certified Hungarian translations also have to be attached. The Hungarian ENIC also accepts not certified translations in languages listed in the *General Information on the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications*. Still, a typed Hungarian translation must be submitted in these cases as well. Two photocopies of the certified copies and translations also have to be submitted.

In addition, it is worth giving a detailed description of all information regarding professional career in the CV that also has to be submitted in two copies.

II. The end of the procedure's first part, the interim (conditionally recognising) decision

The requirements completed during the foreign medical studies cannot fully meet the study criteria of the Hungarian medical higher education. The reason behind this is that the pharmaceutical and medical legislation varies in each country. Since the recognition of the qualification allows someone to practice the profession, providing that additional conditions prescribed by the relevant legislation are also fulfilled, according to expert opinion, it is not possible to recognise a foreign qualification obtained in the field of healthcare without the knowledge of the mentioned medical standards and professional practice in Hungary.

Considering all the above, *all applicants* must be prepared that in accordance with the expert's decision the Hungarian ENIC will require the applicants to take a supplementary **professional exam**. In addition, *in some cases* – based on the comparison of study requirements – the fulfilment of **further conditions** may be prescribed (e.g. preparation and defence of a thesis, completion of a final exam). The applicants have 2 years to complete all supplementary requirements.

With respect to all the above, only an interim decision can be issued to the applicants within the 3 months of the recognition procedure determined in the Recognition Act. This decision contains the requirements that must be fulfilled to have the professional qualification testified by the applicant's degree recognised, and it also contains detailed information about the fulfilment of criteria.

III. Professional exam

In case of **general practitioner and dentist qualifications** a professional exam must be taken from the subjects of pharmacology, public health, ethic and medical law.

The exam is organized 3 monthly (March, June, September, and December) by *Semmelweis University Faculty of Medicine* upon the Hungarian ENIC's request. The interim decision contains all information about the application date for the next exam, the exact location of the exam and the date of the exams. The Hungarian ENIC forwards the theme of the exam (indicating the subjects and the sources), the application form and the money transfer postal order (yellow coloured) to the applicants in addition to the interim decision. All exams must be taken on the same day, orally and in Hungarian. The evaluation body informs the Hungarian ENIC about the exam results.

The education institutions are entitled to impose a fee for the examination based on the Recognition Act, and it belongs to the institution's sphere of competence to decide about the amount. The fee can only be maximum 10 times as much as the fee of the procedure established in the Recognition Act, i.e. 150,000 HUF.

The Hungarian ENIC automatically sends a message about the deadline of the application for the next exam and about the date of the exam for those who cannot take the exam on the first date indicated in the decision or in the information letter.

In the case of **pharmacist qualifications** pharmacology, pharmacy administration, ethics and pharmaceutical law needs to be attained. The professional exam is organized by *Semmelweis University Faculty of Pharmacy*. The application for the exam happens on an individual basis, and contrary to the medical and dental professional exams, there is a continuous opportunity to take the exam.

The subjects of the professional (*Hungarológiai*) exam can be found on our Hungarian language website (with the topics and sources indicated).

IV. The end of the procedure, the recognition decision

The Hungarian ENIC recognises the professional qualification testified by a foreign degree only in those cases when the holder of the qualification has fulfilled all additional requirements prescribed in the interim decision. The examining body informs the Hungarian ENIC about the completion of the professional exam; therefore, it is not needed to be certified individually. In the case of other prescribed conditions, the applicant must submit certification issued by the university to the Hungarian ENIC about the completion of the required exam or the defence of the thesis and an extract of the register.

After the completion of all supplementary requirements the Hungarian ENIC issues the recognition decision within 21 days counted from the receipt of the documents. The Hungarian ENIC informs the Office of Health Authorisation and Administrative Procedures ex officio about the fact of recognition and at the same time it sends the decision to the applicant.

After the receipt of the decision the Office of Health Authorisation and Administrative Procedures arranges registry into the **Basic Register of healthcare experts** of which the Office issues a **certificate** and sends it to the applicant by post.

At the same time, the Office of Health Authorisation and Administrative Procedures immediately informs the National Health Insurance Fund (Országos Egészségbiztosítási Pénztár) about the registering of the general practitioners and dentists into Basic Register of healthcare experts so that the **medical stamp** could be issued. The stamp is handed over to the applicant at the regional office of the Health Insurance Fund in the county of residence condition to the possession of a certificate verifying the registry into the Basic Register of healthcare experts.

V. Who can the applicant turn to after the Hungarian ENIC's final decision?

Based on the Act CLIV of 1997 on health care, a person who fulfils the requirements determined by law must be registered into the **Operational Registry** upon request. In Hungary a person can only carry out *healthcare activities* – except for conditions determined by law – if he/she is registered in the Operational Registry.

The Operational Registry of general practitioners, dentists and pharmacists is kept by the Office of Health Authorisation and Administrative Procedures.

If somebody's foreign qualification was recognised, his/her name has already appeared in the Basic Register of healthcare experts and *wants to work as general practitioner, dentist or pharmacist*, he/she can submit an application to the **National Directorate General for Hospitals** in order to be registered in the Operational Registry.

Based on regulations in force for non-Hungarian citizens the condition of registration into Operational Registry is to have a valid work permit, except for cases determined by law.

In case someone has a specialist healthcare or pharmacist qualification, he/she can have this specialist qualification recognised after the recognition of his/her basic medical degree. The recognition of **specialist medical or pharmacist qualifications** falls under the competence of the National Directorate General for Hospitals (contact information: point A, 4th paragraph).