



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

# The Recognition of Professional Qualifications and Regulation of Professions

Call for Evidence

Closing date: 23 October 2020

August 2020



**OGL**

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# Introduction

Qualified professionals work at the forefront of our public services and are crucial to the UK's world-leading services sectors. Consumers value the high-quality services that they receive from these professionals. An effective regulatory environment for professions is vital to maintaining these high standards and promoting the safety of services.

In the UK, there are over 120 professions<sup>1</sup> that are regulated by a network of over 100 regulators. These professions provide many employment opportunities needed to build a strong economic recovery after COVID-19. We need to ensure that access to and progression within professions is open to all, supporting social mobility in the UK.

The UK's regulatory system for professions also sets out our approach to recognising professional qualifications gained in other countries. We want to continue attracting the best global professionals to work in the UK, ensuring they meet the UK's high standards.

Some of the principles in UK law which underpin our approach to the regulation of professions originate in EU law. When the Transition Period, agreed in the Withdrawal Agreement<sup>2</sup>, concludes at the end of this year, EU law will no longer apply in the UK. If no satisfactory bilateral arrangements relating to professional qualifications are agreed with the EU this year, an interim system for recognising professional qualifications will come into place in January 2021. This would allow holders of EEA and Swiss qualifications to seek recognition of their qualifications where they meet UK standards.

As this would be a temporary system, we are taking this opportunity to look at the UK's overarching approach to the recognition of professional qualifications from other countries. We are also seeking to gather evidence about our current domestic arrangements for regulation of professions. This Call for Evidence is the first step in making sure we have a regulatory environment that supports jobs, gives fair access to global professionals and maintains high standards.

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<sup>1</sup> This is the number of generic professions regulated in the UK based on the European Commission's Regulated Professions Database. The generic names of professions are headings under which the regulated professions in the respective countries are grouped together and aim to give an indication of the general scope of activities of the regulated professions. The only authentic name of a regulated profession is that of the language of the country in which the profession is regulated and it is up to Member States to choose which generic heading they insert their regulated professions. The full number of regulated professions using authentic names in the UK is 248. Source: The European Commission, 2020, European Commission's Regulated Professions Database (accessed 1 July 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Agreement on the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community (October 2019).

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# General information

## Why we are consulting

This Call for Evidence will seek insights on the UK's approach to the recognition of professional qualifications and the regulation of professions. In particular, we want to:

- ensure that the way we recognise qualifications from other countries is fair, complements the needs of the UK workforce and maintains high levels of quality and consumer protection;
- promote a regulatory environment that supports jobs, social mobility and access to professions for individuals from all backgrounds;
- ensure the regulation of professions is forward looking, adaptive and meets the needs of consumers; and
- strengthen the UK's ability to negotiate international trade agreements on recognition of qualifications.

## Consultation details

**Issued:** 25 August 2020

**Respond by:** 23 October 2020, 23:59

**Enquiries to:**

Email: [professional-regulation-evidence@beis.gov.uk](mailto:professional-regulation-evidence@beis.gov.uk)

**Consultation reference:** The Recognition of Professional Qualifications and Regulation of Professions

**Audiences:** We want to hear from the broad range of individuals, businesses and organisations that interact with all aspects of regulated professions.

**Territorial extent:** At this stage, we are interested in gathering evidence on a UK-wide basis. Responsibility for the regulation of many professions is devolved, and Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland may have specific regulators serving each nation.

## How to respond

The easiest way to respond to this Call for Evidence is through our online questionnaire. This questionnaire is designed to help the Government understand the views of different stakeholders.

There are specific questions for professionals who have qualified in the UK or abroad, businesses employing professionals, students looking to qualify in a profession, education providers, consumers of regulated services, and trade experts or academics with an interest in this work.

These questions seek to understand the experiences of a variety of stakeholders, including:

- the processes required to qualify and practise as a recognised professional, or to gain recognition of professional qualifications;
- the costs and benefits of employing a regulated professional over someone without a recognised qualification; and
- what deters people from qualifying as a regulated professional.

Regulators are invited to respond to the questions in Annex C 'Questionnaire for Regulators'. This provides an opportunity for detailed feedback on the requirements needed for professionals to join their registers and explore potential changes to the routes to recognising qualifications from other countries. Please submit these returns via email in a Microsoft Word Document.

**Respond online at:** <https://beisgovuk.citizenspace.com/trade/professionalregulationevidence>

or

**Email to:** [professional-regulation-evidence@beis.gov.uk](mailto:professional-regulation-evidence@beis.gov.uk)

When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation.

Your response will be most useful if it is framed in direct response to the questions posed, though further comments and evidence are also welcome.

## Confidentiality and data protection

Information you provide in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be disclosed in accordance with UK legislation (the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential please tell us, but be aware that we cannot guarantee confidentiality in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be regarded by us as a confidentiality request.

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We will process your personal data in accordance with all applicable data protection laws. See our [privacy policy](#).

We will summarise all responses and publish this summary on [GOV.UK](#). The summary will include a list of names or organisations that responded, but not people's personal names, addresses or other contact details.

### Quality assurance

This consultation has been carried out in accordance with the government's [consultation principles](#).

If you have any complaints about the way this consultation has been conducted, please email: [beis.bru@beis.gov.uk](mailto:beis.bru@beis.gov.uk).

## Open Call for Evidence

This Call for Evidence will seek insights on the UK's approach to the recognition of professional qualifications and the regulation of professions. In particular, we want to:

- ensure that the way we recognise qualifications from other countries is fair, complements the needs of the UK workforce and maintains high levels of quality and consumer protection;
- promote a regulatory environment that supports jobs, social mobility and access to professions for individuals from all backgrounds;
- ensure the regulation of professions is forward looking, adaptive and meets the needs of consumers; and
- strengthen the UK's ability to negotiate international trade agreements on recognition of qualifications.

At this stage, we are interested in gathering evidence on a UK-wide basis. Responsibility for the regulation of many professions is devolved. We note that professions for which responsibility is devolved in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland may have specific regulators serving each nation. The Government will take forward the findings from the Call for Evidence in collaboration with the Devolved Administrations.

We want to hear from the broad range of individuals, businesses and organisations that interact with all aspects of regulated professions. We would like to hear from you in particular if you are:

- a student studying for a professional qualification at a university, in further education or on an apprenticeship;
- someone who uses the services of regulated professionals;
- a UK or international regulated professional;
- a business which employs regulated professionals;
- an education provider who supports individuals in acquiring qualifications needed to enter regulated professions; and
- an individual with a particular interest.

We are interested in your experiences of interacting with the existing regulatory environment and your intentions for interactions with them in the future. In particular, we would be interested in your views on three main themes:

- How the UK recognises **professional qualifications from other countries**, to inform the UK's future approach.



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- Experience of professionals moving and operating within **the UK internal market**, to support the UK Government's thinking in relation to the effective operation of the UK's internal market.
- How professions are regulated in the UK, both professions that are regulated by law and those that are voluntarily regulated.

You can provide your views by completing our online questionnaire.<sup>3</sup> We invite regulators to provide detailed feedback using Annex C 'Questionnaire for Regulators'. Where possible, we welcome the provision of evidence and data to support responses. Throughout this work, we will also seek feedback through meetings with relevant groups, organisations and businesses.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://beisgovuk.citizenspace.com/trade/professionalregulationevidence>

## Background

### What is a regulated profession?

The most common form of professional regulation occurs when an individual is required by law to gain a qualification, or carry out specific training, and then register with a regulator to practise that profession or use a professional title. A broad range of professions are regulated in this way, such as architects, nurses and security guards. This makes sure that those providing services have the appropriate knowledge and training.

There are some professions where there is voluntary regulation; where certain qualifications or experience may be required for membership of a professional body which governs those members. This type of regulation does not usually limit or prevent access to the profession generally. These types of professions include accountants, civil engineers and construction workers.

Annex A includes more information about how professions are regulated in the UK. This Call for Evidence invites views on professions that are regulated by law and those that are voluntarily regulated to ensure that we learn from a wide range of approaches.

### What does the ‘recognition of professional qualifications’ mean?

Before a person can practise in a regulated profession outside the country in which they obtained their qualification, they must be authorised by the regulator in the country in which they want to practise. Regulators can offer a recognition route: a process whereby an individual can request to have their existing qualifications recognised. This can enable them to practise without the need to re-qualify.

During the Transition Period, which expires at the end of this year, EU law continues to apply in the UK as a result of the terms set out in the Withdrawal Agreement. This means that the UK currently offers recognition routes for professionals from the EU and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland). These countries in turn provide UK professionals with a route to recognition.

Some regulators currently offer recognition routes for professional qualifications from other countries outside the EU, EEA EFTA and Switzerland. But this is not currently provided for on a consistent basis across all professions.

# The Recognition of Professional Qualifications from outside the UK

## Context

The UK market for services provided by professionals in the public and private sectors is renowned internationally for maintaining the highest of standards. This reputation is something that the UK will build upon in our role as a key global trading partner.<sup>4</sup>

When professionals move to or from the UK, either permanently or to provide services temporarily, they may need to get their professional qualifications recognised as meeting the UK standards before they can practise. They will also need to meet other requirements, such as visa or work permit requirements.

It is vital we ensure that routes to qualification recognition exist to: enable professionals from overseas to practise in the UK; facilitate trade in professional services; provide the necessary support for business; maintain high standards within regulated professions; and play a role in safeguarding our refugee and migrant communities.

The Government's future skills-based immigration system<sup>5</sup> is designed to ensure the UK can continue to attract professionals with the skills and training it needs.

At present, during the Transition Period, EU law continues to apply in the UK, subject to the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement. As a result, the UK still has a system of qualification recognition derived from EU law, which for most professions is set out in the EU Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications.<sup>6</sup> The system provides routes for a wide range of EU, EEA EFTA (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and Swiss professionals to seek recognition of their professional qualifications in the UK. Under this system, in the 10-year period between 2007 and 2016, the UK gave around 148,000 recognition decisions, more than any other EU Member State.<sup>7</sup>

Following the end of the Transition Period on 31 December 2020, EU law, including the EU Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications,<sup>8</sup> will no longer apply in the UK. The UK will have the opportunity to amend or replace its system of qualification recognition as it applies to EU, EEA EFTA and Swiss professionals.

If no satisfactory bilateral arrangements relating to professional qualifications are agreed with the EU this year, on 1 January 2021 the Government will put in place a temporary system of

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<sup>4</sup> In 2019, the UK had a global trade surplus in services of £106.2bn with services exports constituting 46.9% of total exports. DIT, last updated 19 June 2020, [Trade and Investment Core Statistics](#).

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-immigration-system-what-you-need-to-know>

<sup>6</sup> Directive (EU) 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications is implemented into domestic law by various pieces of legislation, including the European Union (Recognition of Professional Qualifications) Regulations 2015 and the European qualifications (Health and Social Care Professions) Regulations 2016.

<sup>7</sup> BEIS analysis of the European Commission Decisions Database.

<sup>8</sup> The recognition decisions received by EU nationals in the UK, and vice versa, before the end of the Transition Period will be protected under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement.

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recognition that allows holders of EU, EEA EFTA and Swiss qualifications to seek recognition of their qualifications in the UK.<sup>9</sup> The Government will subsequently make appropriate modifications to this system, informed by this Call for Evidence.

Outside of the arrangements derived from EU law, some regulators offer recognition routes to a wide range of professionals from other countries, but others offer very limited routes.

The Government will ensure that individuals with Irish professional qualifications continue to have a means of applying for recognition in the UK, as per commitments made under the Common Travel Area.<sup>10</sup> The UK will ensure that British and Irish citizens have the right to work in the UK and Ireland.

## Future considerations

This Call for Evidence therefore intends to gather information on the way that the UK recognises international professional qualifications including:

- the professions that benefit the most from international professionals joining the workforce;
- the professions that have a shortage of workforce supply;
- the professions that may benefit from negotiated arrangements in future trade deals;
- information about the high standards expected of professionals to qualify for recognition across all regulated professions to inform future best practice; and
- the level of access provided to UK professionals by other countries.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2019/312/contents/made>

<sup>10</sup> The Common Travel Area is a long-standing arrangement between the UK, the Crown Dependencies (Bailiwick of Jersey, Bailiwick of Guernsey and the Isle of Man) and Ireland.

# The UK Internal Market

## Context

The UK's internal market, across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, must function well to ensure our overall economic prosperity and that job opportunities are available across the UK.

A significant amount of responsibility for professional regulation is devolved in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The devolution of professional regulation means it can be used to help support the wider policies of the Devolved Administrations. For example, education policy is devolved, so it is sensible that the teaching profession is regulated separately in each of the four nations so that training requirements align with devolved education policy.

While many professions could be regulated differently across the UK, this is not the case in practice, with most professions still regulated on a UK-wide basis.

Where professions are regulated differently within the UK, there is potential for barriers to movement of professionals or provision of services from one UK nation to another if there is no process for professionals to gain recognition in the different jurisdictions of the UK.

Currently, there is no UK-wide recognition system to prevent new barriers and facilitate the recognition of professional qualifications between England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This means that it could be easier for certain overseas applicants to gain recognition in a given UK nation than professionals from another UK nation. This is because overseas applicants may be able to use their rights provided by the UK's existing legislation on the recognition of professional qualifications.

## Future considerations

Through UK Internal Market White Paper<sup>11</sup> the Government consulted on options to protect the opportunities for businesses to work and operate in all four nations, based on the principles of mutual recognition and non-discrimination. The White Paper referenced recognition of professional qualifications within the UK.

Stakeholders may use this Call for Evidence to submit additional insights and evidence about professionals' experience moving and operating within the UK internal market. This will help support the UK Government in its subsequent thinking on the operation of a UK Internal Market.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-internal-market/uk-internal-market>

# The Regulation of Professions

## Context

In general, professions are regulated to raise standards: protecting consumers of services and the wider public from practitioners who do not have the necessary skills or training.

This needs to be balanced alongside promoting a regulatory environment that supports social mobility and access to professions for individuals from all backgrounds.

The regulation of professions, in particular the standards set by regulators and the training provided by our education sector, has enabled UK professionals to become world leading.

We aim to ensure the future regulation of professions continues along this trajectory, balancing the needs of the UK economy and society. To do this, we are gathering evidence to further our understanding of how we strike this balance, identifying areas of best practice.

This evidence gathering is timely. The services sector accounts for 81% of employment in the UK, providing work for 26.6 million people<sup>12</sup>, many of whom are qualified professionals. At a time when COVID-19 is impacting the economy, it is imperative that regulation of professions enables access to employment and promotes social mobility.

## Current landscape

Professions benefit from distinct approaches to regulation: some professions, like nursing, have separate legislation; some are voluntarily regulated by sectors without underpinning legislation; some professions are regulated independently of Government for constitutional reasons; and some are regulated differently across the four nations of the UK.

There are some high-level overarching principles that apply to the regulation of professions to balance the needs of individual professions with the needs of society and the economy.

The current principles for the regulation of professions are not always well established or all-encompassing. The only overarching principles that apply generally to the regulation of most professions in the UK are derived from EU law.<sup>13</sup> After the end of the Transition Period, this law will no longer apply in the UK.

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<sup>12</sup> ONS, valid for Q4 2019, [ONS Labour Force Survey](#)

<sup>13</sup> Directive (EU) 2018/958 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 June 2018 on a proportionality test before adoption of new regulation of professions, implemented by the European Union (Regulated Professions Proportionality Assessment) Regulations 2020.

## Future considerations

Against this backdrop, and with the UK exiting the Transition Period at the end of this year, the time is now ripe to understand and explore whether the current regulatory landscape is right so that UK standards remain world leading.

To do this, we will gather evidence, aiming to:

- build a clear picture of the ways in which professions are regulated and the resulting economic benefits;
- gather evidence to inform ways in which we can increase social mobility and ensure that people from all backgrounds can enter skilled professions;
- evaluate whether requirements for entry into professions are transparent and publicly available; and
- determine whether or not there would be merit in having a UK-wide, cross-sectoral strategy for the regulation of professions (potentially underpinned by regulatory principles).

## Annex A - How professions are regulated in the UK

In the UK, there are over 120 professional qualifications<sup>14</sup> that are regulated by a network of over 100 regulators.

The landscape of regulated professions has developed incrementally over time, often in response to the needs of specific sectors, markets and public interests. The regulation of professions is decentralised and can be market-led, so the Government has allowed autonomy in some sectors.

Most professions are regulated by law or public authority. This type of regulation is generally intended to protect the public interest. Professions that are regulated in this way are often more tightly regulated. This might take one of several different forms, including:

- **Licensing** is the tightest form of regulation. For example, nurses cannot practise unless their qualification meets the standards set in legislation. Nurses are regulated by the public authority – the Nursing and Midwifery Council.
- **Certification** by law or public authority. Certification schemes do not legally limit who may carry out the tasks covered by the profession. Practitioners may apply to be certified as competent by an authority that is underpinned by legislation. For example, architects must meet the standards required by the Architects Registration Board<sup>15</sup> (ARB) to use the title of ‘architect’. But the activities of an architect are not limited by legislation, so individuals could provide similar services without using the title of ‘architect’.

Other professions are voluntarily regulated. Generally, this type of regulation is to signal the quality of the professional service that is being marketed to consumers. This type of regulation can take slightly different forms, including:

- **Accreditation schemes** are not usually restricted by law and are regulated by independent bodies. Accreditation does not legally limit who may carry out professional activities. This means that practitioners have the option of applying for an accredited title from the relevant body but can otherwise practise the profession. For example, acupuncturists can qualify to be accredited as a ‘registered acupuncturist’ by the British Acupuncture Council.

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<sup>14</sup> This is the number of generic professions regulated in the UK based on the European Commission’s Regulated Professions Database. The generic names of professions are headings under which the regulated professions in the respective countries are grouped together and aim to give an indication of the general scope of activities of the regulated professions. The only authentic name of a regulated profession is that of the language of the country in which the profession is regulated and it is up to Member States to choose which generic heading they insert their regulated professions. The full number of regulated professions using authentic names in the UK is 248. Source: The European Commission, 2020, European Commission’s Regulated Professions Database (accessed 1 July 2020).

<sup>15</sup> The Architects Act 1997 sets out the functions of ARB.



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- **Chartered professional bodies** are a common form of a voluntary accreditation scheme. Chartered status is achieved by the professional body being granted Royal Charter by the Privy Council.

There are many other professions that are not regulated in the UK. For example, hairdressers, management consultants, bakers and ski instructors. However, in some cases, these professions are regulated in other countries. Where this is the case, industry-led associations have often established voluntary, common approaches within these sectors.

The table below provides some examples of different types of regulated professions and non-regulated professions in the UK.

Table 1: Examples of regulated and non-regulated professions

| Regulated professions <sup>16</sup>  |  |  | Professions that are regulated on a voluntary basis  |  | Professions that are not regulated                  |   |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| Professions where certain activities are reserved to holders of specific professional qualifications <sup>17</sup>                                   | Professions where only the title is protected, but the activity is not reserved to professionals holding specific qualifications <sup>18</sup> | Professions where activities and the title are reserved to holders of specific professional qualifications <sup>19</sup> | Professions regulated voluntarily through Chartered Professional Bodies  | Professions regulated voluntarily through professional associations  | The activities performed are subject to regulations | There is no requirement for qualification or title to conduct activity    |
| Primary and secondary school teacher<br>Nurse<br>Registered gas engineer<br>Approved driving instructor<br>Security guard<br>Insolvency practitioner | Arts therapist<br>Dietitian<br>Environmental health officer<br>Architect<br>Orthoptist   | Dispensing optician<br>Hearing aid dispenser<br>Solicitor<br>Barrister<br>Optometrist                                    | Chartered Civil Engineer<br>Chartered Certified Accountant<br>Chartered Tax Adviser<br>Chartered Insurance Broker<br>Chartered Chemist<br>Chartered Geographer | Landscape architect<br>Conservationist<br>Vocational rehabilitation specialist<br>Master Builder<br>Construction workers | Plumber<br>Diver<br>Financial/Tax advisor           | Management consultant<br>Carpenter<br>Archaeologist<br>Teaching assistant |

<sup>16</sup> Source: European Commission's regulated professions website (accessed 3 July 2020).

<sup>17</sup> Reserves of activities refers to professions where certain activities are mostly restricted to the holders of a specific professional qualification. This may include instances where there are shared reserved activities with other regulated professions.

<sup>18</sup> Protected title (without reserves of activities) refers to professions where only the title is protected.

<sup>19</sup> Reserves of activities and protected title refers to professions where there are both reserved activities and protected title.

## Annex B - Glossary and Abbreviations

### ARB

Architects Registration Board

### Devolved administration

A collective term for the executive bodies in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales – the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government.

### Devolved competence

The policy areas within the competence of one or more of the three devolved legislatures, the Scottish Parliament, the Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

### European Economic Area (EEA)

An economic union between the EU Member States and the three EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway) referred to as an “Internal Market” governed by rules which aim to enable goods, services, capital, and persons to move freely about the EEA.

### European Free Trade Association (EFTA)

An intergovernmental organisation set up for the promotion of free trade and economic integration to the benefit of its four Member States – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

### European Union (EU)

An economic and political union of 27 countries. It operates an internal (or single) market which allows free movement of goods, capital, services and people between member states. Switzerland is not an EU or EEA member but is part of the single market.

### European Union Directive

A European Union legislative act that sets out a goal that all EU Member States must transpose into their national law.

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## EU Member State

The 27 countries in the EU which include Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

## Free trade agreement (FTA)

A treaty among two or more countries to form a free trade area. This means having zero tariffs (or reduced tariffs) and reducing other regulatory restrictions on trade in goods and services.

## Gross value added (GVA)

The value generated by any unit engaged in the production of goods and services.

## Mutual recognition agreement (MRA)

An international, bilateral agreement between two or more regulators, through which domestic regulators or bodies agree to recognise one another's qualifications.

## Recognition of professional qualifications

Authorisation, usually in respect of an international qualification, by a regulator to practise in a regulated profession.

## Regulated profession

A regulated profession is: a professional activity or group of activities, access to which is limited by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions to the holders of specific qualifications; or a professional activity or group of activities, the pursuit of which is by a person using a professional title limited by legislative, regulatory or administrative provision to holders of specific qualifications.

There are also professions that provide for voluntary regulation, usually by membership to a professional body, that may be subject to holding specific qualifications and may award professional titles but do not generally restrict access to a profession.

## Regulator

A body with a regulatory or supervisory role over a profession(s), such as a professional or statutory body, for example, the Teaching Regulation Agency or a central or local government authority.

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## Transition Period

Under the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020, this is the time period from 31 January 2020 to 31 December 2020.

## UK internal market

The movement of goods, capital, services and people between four nations – England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

## Annex C - Questionnaire for Regulators

We have published an open call for evidence on the recognition of professional qualifications and the regulation of professions to further our understanding of the field.

Our aim is to foster a regulatory environment for professions that supports the creation of jobs, opportunities for social mobility and provides effective consumer protection.

We invite you, as a key stakeholder in the regulation of professions and recognition of professional qualifications, to respond in more detail separately from the online questionnaire. We ask that regulators who wish to feedback should do so by providing responses to the questions below by 23 October 2020.

Please submit your returns via email in a Microsoft Word Document. The format of your responses is for you to decide, however please indicate which question your answer relates to in order to support timely analysis.

Completed responses should be emailed to: [professional-regulation-evidence@beis.gov.uk](mailto:professional-regulation-evidence@beis.gov.uk).

### Questions for Regulators

#### Current Regulation of Professions

1. Please tell us in which nation(s) you are a regulator of a profession:

- England
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland

2. Please state the sector(s) you regulate within.

3. Please state the profession(s) you regulate.

4. Please outline the rationale for regulation within your sector. Listed below are some non-exhaustive possible rationales for regulation you may like to consider in your answer. In each instance, please explain their importance to regulation within your sector

- Protects public interest for environmental reasons
- Protects public safety for health reasons
- Value for money / protects taxpayer
- Enables professionals to charge more for their services
- Protects consumers from receiving a low quality of services
- Provides training

5. Please outline any evidence you have on the consumer protection impacts provided by your regulations.

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### International Recognition

*The following questions focus on the route to recognition you offer for applicants with international qualifications.*

6. Please outline your process(es) of recognising someone with an international qualification. In your answer, please include details of how this differs from the process of recognising a domestic applicant, the rationale for this/ the reasons why this is the case, and the costs of administering this route.

If you have different processes for different international routes (e.g. for candidates from the EU, USA, Australia, or due to any Mutual Recognition Agreements you hold), please include details on the differences between them.

7. Please outline any additional steps and their resource implications that you face in processing applicants with international qualifications?

8. With reference to any of the additional steps outlined above, what would you suggest are the priorities for the UK Government in considering future ways to recognise international qualifications? Please include any details on what an ideal system could look like, as well as how it could operate. Please consider what the priorities would be for the profession you regulate.

9. Do you require legislation to give you powers to make changes to your international recognition routes?

10. What level of dialogue do you maintain with your international counterparts? Please outline the benefits and challenges to cooperation. Please also outline if you are a member of any international networks of regulators, what they are and your experience with them.

11. What are your priorities for supporting UK professionals on your register to have access to their profession in other countries? Please outline any Government support that would help.

12. Do you have any provisions for the recognition of professional qualifications held by refugees residing in the UK? If yes, please detail what these are and why you have implemented these provisions. If no, please detail why not.

### Developing Professional Standards and Regulation

*The following questions focus on how you develop your UK professional standards.*

13. Please describe the process by which UK professionals gain qualifications to enter the profession, including detail on the types of education and training they must undergo and how long it takes to complete them.

14. Please describe the process you offer for professionals who have gained the relevant UK qualifications to be brought onto your register.

15. How often do you review your processes and standards? In your answer, please describe both formal and informal ways this is carried out (e.g. via consultancy, membership surveys) and include detail of any changes you have recently made based to this process.

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16. Thinking about key changes that have been made to your qualification processes, what has been the cause for this change? Below are some non-exhaustive possible options to consider in your answer.

- Legislative change
- Findings from own internal review
- Feedback from consumers
- Feedback from professionals

17. Do you feel that the current standards you set, against which applicants are assessed to enter onto the register, are a fair reflection of the level of skill, training, education, and experience required to practise their profession? Please explain your answer.

18. Please detail any principles of regulation you follow (e.g. proportionality and transparency) and how you uphold them, and whether they support you in your duties as a regulator.

19. Please detail any requirements you may place on the professionals you regulate and why they are necessary. If you do not impose any requirements, please justify your reasons for not doing so.

20. Please describe the process by which you determine your application fees. Please set out any principles or guidelines you adhere to when determining fee amounts.

21. Please detail any changes that you are considering for your sector to ensure the profession you regulate stays relevant to current challenges. Does current regulation allow for you to make these changes?

22. Please detail any steps you take to help make sure that your standards and processes are adaptive, support innovation and promote social mobility.

## Continuous Professional Development

23. Please detail any continuous professional development that is required for professionals to remain on your register. Please include detail on how often this should take place, in what form, as well as the benefits of adhering and consequences of not adhering to these requirements.

## Diversity and Inclusion

24. Do you collect data on the diversity of both your UK and international applications? For example, on gender or ethnic background.

25. Please outline any steps you take to eliminate unconscious bias from your recognition process.

26. Please outline any steps you take to support job creation in the profession you regulate.

27. Please outline any steps you take to attract a diverse workforce to the profession you regulate.

## Additional Information

28. Please detail any other information or evidence that you think we should take into consideration during this Call for Evidence.



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**Thank you for taking the time to respond to these questions.**

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This consultation is available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/recognition-of-professional-qualifications-and-regulation-of-professions-call-for-evidence>

If you need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email [enquiries@beis.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@beis.gov.uk). Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.