



Mutual Recognition of Qualifications – Period of Adaptation

Information for applicants, employers and supervisors in the Early Years Sector

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Introduction

What are ‘mutual recognition rights’?

Under European Community law, the Professional Qualifications Directive (Directive 2005/36/EC), if a person is fully qualified to practise a specific profession in one relevant European state, there is a presumption that, in principle, they should be permitted to practise that profession in any other relevant European state. However, if there are substantial differences between the education, training and experience of the applicant and the requirements for the practice of that profession in the host state, the applicant may be asked to compensate for these differences by undergoing additional testing or a period of adaptation (known as ‘compensatory measures’).

For this purpose ‘fully qualified’ means that the applicant meets all of the requirements in order to practise in their home state, whatever they may be. If a profession is regulated in their home state, this may simply mean holding a qualification, and in others there may be a compulsory period of supervised training. In member states where a profession is not regulated, the applicant will need to prove they are ‘established’ in that profession by having practised for at least two out of the last ten years.

A ‘relevant European state’ means Switzerland or any of the member states of the European Economic Area (EEA) which are:

Austria	France	Malta
Belgium	Germany	Netherlands
Bulgaria	Greece	Norway
Cyprus	Hungary	Poland
Bulgaria	Iceland	Portugal
Cyprus	Italy	Romania
Czech Republic	Latvia	Slovakia
Denmark	Liechtenstein	Slovenia
Estonia	Lithuania	Spain
Finland	Luxembourg	Sweden

About Early Years qualifications requirements in England

It is the role of the Department for Education (DfE) to define the qualifications that practitioners must hold to be included in the staff:child ratios of the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#) statutory framework. The DfE does this by setting criteria that determine the skills, knowledge and understanding that an individual must demonstrate to achieve the qualifications. These criteria are used by awarding organisations to develop their qualifications. The DfE checks that the criteria are met before approving the qualifications as meeting the EYFS requirements.

The DfE has worked with UK NARIC to develop a bespoke ‘Early Years Service’ (EYS). This report will provide advice to applicants on which of the required early years criteria have been met by an overseas qualification and the future options.

To apply for the Early Years Service from UK NARIC, or further information, please see www.naric.org.uk/earlyyears. There is a charge for this service.

Who is entitled to a period of adaptation?

Applicants who have had their early years qualifications assessed by UK NARIC and have been informed that they do not fully meet the requirements for practice in England may either achieve specific qualification units (aptitude test) or undertake a period of adaptation to meet the requirements.

The UK NARIC Early Years Service report details the outcome of the assessment of the overseas qualifications and offers guidance on any mutual recognition requirements. The DfE is responsible for making decisions on mutual recognition rights in England and evidence of completion of the adaptation period should be sent to the DfE (please see the contact section on page 7).

If you are an applicant who does not meet the criteria for mutual recognition rights, the information in this document will not apply to you.

Periods of adaptation

A period of adaptation is a period of supervised practice which allows an applicant with 'mutual recognition rights' to reach the standard required in England. If this period is successfully completed and the DfE confirms, an applicant can then practise their profession in England. This document gives guidance to applicants, employers and supervisors about periods of adaptation.

Information for applicants

Why a period of adaptation?

If, having looked at your education, training and experience, the DfE feels that there are significant areas of their skills, knowledge and experience in which you do not meet the standards, they will ask you to achieve specific qualification units (aptitude test) or undertake a period of adaptation.

The criteria to be covered will be set down in the information provided by UK NARIC.

What is a period of adaptation?

A period of adaptation is a period of supervised practice intended to make up for significant shortfalls which have been identified in an application. It will be a minimum period of 6 months. These are in the areas where, in the opinion of the DfE, the standards have not been met.

If you undertake a period of adaptation, it is your responsibility to arrange a suitable placement. The DfE is unable to assist you with finding or funding a placement. Sometimes employers will be unable to support a period of adaptation. This might be because of a lack of resources or the training needs of other staff. The DfE cannot make an employer support your period of adaptation.

A period of adaptation must be undertaken in an early years setting delivering the EYFS within England and supervised by a practitioner with at least a full and relevant level 3 qualification.

You need to make sure when you are undertaking your period of adaptation that you cover the areas which have been identified by UK NARIC on your Early Years Service report. You should speak to your supervisor to make sure that you are gaining the experience that you need.

Supervision

A period of adaptation must be supervised by a practitioner with at least a full and relevant level 3 qualification. On completion, we ask the supervisor to send us details of how the criteria and requirements have been met. Alternatively, if at the end of the recommended period the supervisor feels that the applicant has not completely met the requirement, they may extend the period of adaptation at their discretion. There is no upper time limit for the completion of a period of adaptation.

Applying to DfE for confirmation of approved status.

To apply to DfE for confirmation that the required period of adaptation has been completed successfully and that you are permitted to practise that profession in England, applicants must provide DfE with the following:

- Your UK NARIC Early Years Service report detailing the criteria to be met by compensatory measures
- Evidence from a supervisor that the adaptation period has been completed and that you have demonstrated competence for all the criteria

Once an application has been assessed by DfE officials, the DfE has the following options:

- The assessors will recommend that you meet the standards of proficiency and are able to practise and count at a specified level in the staff ratios.
- The assessors may ask for 'further verification'; that is specific additional information to help process the application
- If the assessors have identified substantial shortfalls between the applicant's education, training and experience and the requirements for practice in the UK, they can ask the applicant to undertake further training and/or assessment to meet the requirements.

Information for employers and supervisors

Do I have to offer an adaptation placement?

As an employer you are under no obligation to provide a period of adaptation. The DfE recognises that workload and resource pressures may mean that you are not able to support an applicant seeking a period of adaptation. The DfE is unable to provide any funding for placements. However, if you can assist, this can be beneficial to both you and the applicant. The applicant benefits by gaining familiarity and experience with English early years settings and experience of working practices, as well as being able to become qualified to practise. The activity of supporting and supervising an applicant in completing a period of adaptation could be a useful opportunity for staff to gain and develop important teaching and mentoring skills, which could be of wider benefit.

A period of adaptation must be undertaken in an early years setting delivering the EYFS within England and supervised by a practitioner with at least a full and relevant level 3 qualification.

Supervisors

Supervisors have an important role to play in supporting and supervising applicants who are undertaking a period of adaptation. If you are able to act as a supervisor your role will be to provide support and supervision to help an applicant achieve the DfE's standards. This might include teaching, mentoring and supervised practice, in a similar way as you might help and support students/apprentices.

Before you begin your supervisory role, you will need to know details of the criteria the period of adaptation should cover. This will tell you the areas in which there are significant shortfalls in the applicant's knowledge and skills, and assist you in structuring a placement to meet these needs. You should meet with the applicant before the adaptation period begins to discuss and agree how you will assess whether they have met the criteria.

During the period of adaptation you can treat the applicant in the same way as you might treat a student on a placement or a professional returning to practise after a career break. As working practices vary between member states and early years settings, it is good practice to offer an orientation and induction period before the adaptation period begins. This will allow the applicant to become more familiar with local practices such as record keeping and health and safety requirements.

If you have concerns about your role or about the way an applicant is working during their period of adaptation, you should inform a more senior manager or consider suspending the placement.

Completion of the period of adaptation

Once the adaptation period is completed you will need to confirm to DfE in writing whether or not the applicant meets the required criteria.

The letter must include:

- the full name of the applicant
- the UK NARIC reference number
- your name, position, employer, address, phone number and signature
- where the adaptation period took place
- the start and end dates of the adaptation period
- a statement saying that you have read the original recommendation of UK NARIC and are satisfied that the applicant does / does not meet the criteria set
- a short statement explaining why you feel that the applicant should or should not be considered qualified to practise in England and at which level

The letter should be sent by the applicant with the UK NARIC Early Years Service report to the DfE via the Contact Us form (see below) and addressed to:

Early Years Mutual Recognition
Early Years Workforce Team

More information

Information about mutual recognition rights can be found by visiting <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/services/free-movement-professionals>

The Centre for Professional Qualifications (CPQ) provides essential information for qualified professionals to aid mobility: www.naric.org.uk/cpq

Contact us

For further information, please contact the DfE via: www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe