

REGISTRATIECOMMISSIE  
GENEESKUNDIG  
SPECIALISTEN

*knmg*

# Recognition and registration

A manual for holders of foreign  
qualifications

Team International RGS, 4 January 2021

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## Introduction

In this manual, the Registratiecommissie Geneeskundig Specialisten (RGS, the Medical Registration Council) guides you through the application process for recognition and registration as a specialist holding a foreign diploma.

A doctor holding a specialist diploma issued outside the Netherlands who wishes to practise in the Netherlands must apply to the RGS to have his or her specialist diploma recognised and apply to be registered. The RGS will handle both applications from a doctor simultaneously. They may submit both applications on a single form to the RGS, which will announce its decision on both requests in a single letter to them.

Directive 2005/36 EC (hereinafter: the Directive) applies to applications from nationals from the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland who have obtained a qualification in one of these countries. Under the Directive, a qualification obtained abroad can be recognised without a substantive assessment (automatic) or following a substantive assessment (general system). In cases where the Directive does not apply, recognition is only possible following a substantive assessment based on Dutch regulations (national law).

Following recognition of the qualification, the applicant must satisfy the following requirements for registration in the Netherlands: registration in the BIG register for doctors, proficiency in the Dutch language, proof of professional status, employment as a medical specialist and participation in professional development.



**Please note that this manual is a simplified representation of RGS procedures. Consult the regulations in Appendix 1 for full information or get in touch with the Team International of the RGS via [buitenland@fed.knmg.nl](mailto:buitenland@fed.knmg.nl) or + 31 88 – 440 43 30.**

# 1 Recognition

## 1.1 Directive 2005/36/EC

The Directive provides for the recognition of professional qualifications in countries that form part of the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland.

The Directive applies to the following countries:

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



The Directive applies if the holder of a foreign qualification is a national of one of the aforementioned countries and the qualification was issued in one of these countries.

The documents that are deemed qualifications are set out in Appendix V of the Directive for each country. No other evidence of having taken a study programme will be considered for the purpose of recognition.

## 1.2 Automatic recognition

Appendix V of the Directive lists all regulated specialist programmes that satisfy the minimum requirements of the Directive. Because these specialist programmes satisfy the European minimum requirements, qualifications obtained following the completion of one of these

programmes are recognised by the competent authorities in the Member States, without a substantive assessment of the programme in question being required: automatic recognition.

To be eligible for automatic recognition, the qualification must be among those listed in Appendix V of the Directive.

### 1.3 Recognition following substantive assessment

Any qualification that is not among those listed in Appendix V of the Directive is not eligible for automatic recognition under the Directive.

In such a case, the RGS will assess whether the programme in terms of its nature, content and duration is equivalent to a programme in the Netherlands in the same (or most similar) specialty:

- If the RGS finds that the specialist programme is equivalent to the Dutch programme, the RGS will recognise the qualification in question.
- If the RGS decides that the programme is not equivalent, it will assess whether the deficiencies can be compensated for by means of a compensating measure (see 3.1).
- If the severity of the deficiencies is such that they cannot be compensated for by a compensating measure, the RGS will reject the application for recognition.

### 1.4 Specialties and *profielen*

Twenty-eight branches of medicine are recognised as medical specialties in the Netherlands. A further twelve branches of medicine have been designated as *profiel* (a discipline protected as a trademark). Automatic recognition is not possible for a *profiel*. As described in section 1.3, the RGS will assess whether the programme taken is equivalent to the Dutch programme in the *profiel*. Get in touch with us if you have any questions about recognition of a *profiel* based on your foreign specialist diploma.

Appendix 2 contains an overview of all specialties and *profielen* for which registers have been established in the Netherlands. The terms 'specialist' and 'specialty' in this document can also be interpreted as a '*profiel*' and 'doctor practising a *profiel*').

## 2 Registration

Registration<sup>1</sup> always requires registration in the BIG register for doctors. Depending on your situation, the RGS will also require proof of proficiency in the Dutch language, evidence of professional status, proof of employment as a specialist and participation in professional development.

### 2.1 BIG register

Entry in a register of specialists requires registration in the BIG register for doctors. Conditional registration (i.e. a qualified (*geclausuleerde*) registration) is insufficient.

If you have already been entered in the BIG register for doctors, please note that you will need to re-register in the BIG register every five years. Check that your registration in the BIG register for doctors is valid. As soon as you are registered in a specialists' register, you will no longer need to re-register in the BIG register for doctors. This continues to apply for as long as you are registered as a specialist. Submitting an application to be recognised as a specialist is not sufficient to be exempt from re-registration in the BIG register. If you are registered as a doctor practising a *profiel*, you will need to re-register in the BIG register for doctors.

### 2.2 Proficiency in the Dutch language

To register in a specialists' register on the basis of a foreign qualification, you will need to demonstrate proficiency in the Dutch language. This also applies if you hold Dutch nationality. The RGS accepts the following as evidence that you have sufficient mastery of the Dutch language:

- an authenticated copy of a certificate of a Dutch-taught specialist programme;
- an authenticated copy of a certificate of a Dutch-taught medical degree programme;
- authenticated copies of Dutch-taught primary education (primary school) and secondary education (secondary school);
- a certificate of a language test at B2 level.

If language proficiency has been part of the BIG registration procedure, the RGS may waive this requirement.

### 2.3 Professional status

A Certificate of Current Professional Status (CCPS) is evidence issued by the competent authority in the countries where you worked as a specialist. It must demonstrate that you may practise the specialty without restrictions and that you have committed no medical errors or criminal infringements that prevent the practise of the specialty either temporarily or permanently. This document is also referred to as a Certificate of Good Standing.

A CCPS will not be required if you completed the specialist programme less than three months before submitting an application to the RGS.

### 2.4 Employment as a specialist

You must be able to demonstrate that you have practised your medical specialty on a regular basis in the five years prior to the submission of your application (evaluation period).

You must have worked an average of at least sixteen hours per week in the specialty concerned. The RGS recommends that you use the 'Statement of work experience for holders of foreign diplomas' model statement<sup>1</sup>, which can be downloaded via <https://www.knmg.nl/opleiding-herregistratie-carriere/buitenlandse-artsen/erkenning-en-registratie.htm>.

<sup>1</sup> See Article B.8 Besluit Buitenlands gediplomeerden

If you completed the specialist programme less than five years ago, your employment from the time of your completion of the programme will be examined. If you completed the specialist programme more than five years ago, the RGS will examine your employment in the five years prior to your application. If you completed the specialist programme less than three months ago, the RGS will not assess whether you have practised your medical specialty to a sufficient extent.

## **2.5 Continuing medical education**

If you completed the specialist programme more than five years ago, you will be expected to have participated in an average of 40 hours of continuing medical education in the area of the specialty each year in the five years up to applying to register.

This continuing medical education need not be accredited in the Netherlands. However, the RGS will verify that you have actually participated in continuing medical education aimed at advancing the competences of a specialist in the specialty for which registration is being sought.

The RGS will therefore request a statement of continuing medical education which clearly states for each education activity the subject, the provider, the date and location of the continuing medical education and the number of hours involved. You will not be required to submit any evidence unless the RGS requests such.

## 3 Non-compliance with conditions for recognition and registration

### 3.1 Compensating measure

If the RGS decides that the programme you took is not equivalent to the Dutch programme, it will assess whether the deficiencies can be compensated for by means of a compensating measure. The compensating measure lasts a minimum of three months and a maximum of three years and must be taken at a training institution and under the supervision of a trainer recognised by the RGS.

You must find a trainer and a training institution yourself<sup>2</sup>. You can find a list of suitable trainers and training institutions on the KNMG website. The compensating measure can only begin once the RGS has approved the compensating measure programme as provided by the trainer.

### 3.2 Individual training programme

If the RGS recognises a qualification but you fail to satisfy the requirements for registration, it will not be possible to register in the specialists' register at that time.

If you fail to satisfy the registration requirements with regard to employment and/or continuing medical education, the RGS can offer you the opportunity to take an individual training programme (hereinafter: ISP).

An ISP must be taken at a training institution that is recognised by the RGS. The ISP can only begin once the RGS has approved the training programme as provided by the trainer.

### 3.3 Fees

A training institution does not receive any contribution towards the costs for a compensating measure. The salary is therefore a matter between you and the training institution.

<sup>2</sup> There is a different procedure for family physicians in terms of obtaining a position in a training institute and financial contribution

## 4 Service provision

### 4.1 Temporary and occasional services

Holders of foreign qualifications who do not wish to take up residence in the Netherlands because they will only be working for a short period or to a limited extent can report to the RGS that they wish to provide services on a temporary and occasional<sup>3</sup> basis. This is only possible if the Directive applies.

Instead of an application for recognition and registration, you may opt to provide services on a temporary and occasional basis. In that case, you must announce this to the RGS at least four weeks before you provide any services for the first time.

The temporary and occasional character of each case of service provision will in any event be assessed in terms of the duration, frequency, regularity and continuity of the service provided.

In order to provide services as a specialist, you have to be authorized to practice medicine in the Netherlands. For that, you need to be entered in the BIG register for doctors or have received the BIG register's permission to provide services as a physician.

If you satisfy the requirements, the RGS will decide to allow you to provide services in the capacity of specialist, in principle for the duration of a maximum of one year. You will not receive proof of registration in a specialists' register. Furthermore, your specialty will not be entered in the BIG register for doctors. Nevertheless, service providers are subject to Dutch disciplinary legal measures.

<sup>3</sup> Article B10 Besluit Buitenslands gediplomeerden

## 5 Application

### 5.1 How to start the procedure

To practise as a specialist in the Netherlands, you must be entered in the BIG register for doctors and in a specialists' register. The BIG register is administrated by the CIBG of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. The specialists' registers have been established by the RGS of the Koninklijke Nederlandsche Maatschappij tot bevordering der Geneeskunst (KNMG, the Dutch Royal Medical Association).

The CIBG and RGS collaborate in the area of holders of foreign qualifications. This means it is possible to apply for recognition as a doctor and specialist at the same time. When applying for recognition as a doctor with the CIBG, you may also indicate your desire for recognition and registration as a specialist by the RGS. If you do so, the RGS will email you a letter listing the requirements applicable to you, an application form and an invoice.

### 5.2 How to begin the procedure if you already have a BIG registration

You can submit an application or service provision report by sending an email to the RGS. Be sure to include the following information in your email:

- your full name;
- your nationality or residence rights;
- your date of birth;
- your town and country of birth;
- the specialty for which you have been trained;
- the country where and the date on which you obtained the specialist diploma.

Following receipt of your application, the RGS will email you a letter listing the requirements applicable to you, an application form and an invoice.

## Annex 1: Regulations

You can find the following information on the KNMG website:

- Besluit Buitenlands gediplomeerden van het CGS;
- Regeling specialismen en profielen geneeskunst van de KNMG;
- Kaderbesluit CCMS;
- Besluit voor het specifieke specialisme;
- Beleidsregels RGS.

Not referred to on the KNMG website:

- Directive 2005/36/EC;
- Algemene wet erkenning EU beroepskwalificaties;
- Wet op de beroepen in de individuele gezondheidszorg.

## Annex 2: Registers

### Specialties:

Anaesthesiology  
Occupational medicine - domain labour and health  
Insurance medicine - domain labour and health  
Cardiology  
Cardiothoracic surgery  
Dermato-venereology  
Intellectual disability medicine  
General surgery  
General medical practice/Family medicine  
General (internal) medicine  
Otorhinolaryngology (ENT)  
Paediatrics  
Clinical genetics  
Geriatrics  
Respiratory medicine  
Gastroenterology  
Public health medicine  
Microbiology-bacteriology  
Neurological surgery  
Neurology  
Nuclear medicine  
Obstetrics and gynaecology  
Orthopaedics  
Ophthalmology  
Pathological anatomy  
Plastic surgery  
Psychiatry  
Diagnostic radiology  
Radiation therapy  
Rehabilitation medicine  
Rheumatology  
Elderly care medicine  
Sports medicine  
Urology.

### *Profielen*

Policy and advisory medicine  
Cosmetic medicine  
Donor medicine  
Forensic medicine  
Communicable disease control  
Global health and tropical medicine  
Youth healthcare  
Medical environmental sciences  
Social-medical assessment and advisory medicine  
Accident and emergency medicine  
Tuberculosis control  
Addiction medicine  
Hospital medicine.

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