

REGISTRATIECOMMISSIE  
GENEESKUNDIG  
SPECIALISTEN

*knmg*

# Recognition and registration

A manual for holders of foreign  
qualifications

Registratiecommissie Geneeskundig Specialisten (the Medical  
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## Introduction

In this manual, we guide you through the application process for recognition and registration as a specialist holding a foreign qualification.

A doctor holding a specialist qualification issued outside the Netherlands who wishes to practise in the Netherlands must apply with us to have their specialist qualification recognised and apply to be registered. We will handle both applications simultaneously. You may submit both applications on a single form and we will announce our decision on both requests in a single letter.

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 our procedures. Consult the regulations in Appendix 1 for full information or get in touch via [buizenland@fed.knmg.nl](mailto:buizenland@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:

Austria  
 Belgium  
 Bulgaria  
 Cyprus  
 Croatia  
 Czech Republic  
 Denmark  
 Germany  
 Estonia  
 Finland  
 France  
 Greece  
 Hungary  
 Iceland  
 Ireland  
 Italy  
 Latvia  
 Liechtenstein  
 Lithuania  
 Luxembourg  
 Malta  
 Netherlands  
 Norway  
 Poland  
 Portugal  
 Romania  
 Slovenia  
 Slovakia  
 Spain  
 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. We call this process automatic recognition.

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

### 1.3 Evidence of qualification

We ask the applicant for a copy of their diploma. This copy must be certified by the authority that issued the original document, or alternatively, a copy can also be certified by a Dutch notary. An attached translation in Dutch by a sworn translator is required, unless the original document is in English, German or French.

A paper certification is not necessary if the competent authority in the country of origin sends the document directly to us by e-mail, or if online verification is possible.

### 1.4 Recognition following substantive assessment

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

In such a case, we will assess whether the programme is equivalent to a programme in the Netherlands in the same (or most similar) specialty in terms of its nature, content and duration. In addition to the diploma, we ask for the official curriculum for the specialty in question, an overview of the specialist training and a list of operations (only for surgical specialties).

- If we find that the specialist programme is equivalent to the Dutch programme, we will recognise the qualification in question.
- If we decide that the programme is not equivalent, we 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, we will reject the application for recognition.

### 1.5 Specialties and *profielen*

In the Netherlands 29 branches of medicine are recognised as medical specialties. A further 12 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, we will assess whether the specialist training is equivalent to the Dutch programme of the *profiel*. Get in touch with us if you have any questions about recognition of a *profiel* based on your foreign specialist qualification.

Appendix 2 contains an overview of all specialties and *profielen* for which registers have been established in the Netherlands. What is explained for specialists and specialties in this manual applies to *profiel* and doctor practising a *profiel* as well.

## 2 Registration

Registration<sup>1</sup> as a specialist with us always first requires registration in the BIG register for doctors. Depending on your situation, we 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 *geclausuleerde* registratie) is insufficient.

If you have already been entered in the BIG register for doctors, please note that without a specialist registration you will need to re-register in the BIG register every 5 years. Check that your registration in the BIG register for doctors is valid when applying for your specialist registration. 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. Only 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 keep re-registering in the BIG register for doctors separate from your *profiel* registration with the RGS.

### 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 are a Dutch national. We accept the following as evidence that you have sufficient mastery of the Dutch language:

- a copy of a certificate of a Dutch-taught specialist programme;
- a copy of a certificate of a Dutch-taught medical degree programme;
- 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, we 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 3 months before submitting an application to us.

### 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 5 years prior to the submission of your application (evaluation period).

A minimum average of at least 16 hours of practise per week in the specialty concerned is required. We recommend that you use the 'Statement of work experience for holders of foreign qualifications model statement', which can be downloaded via [Erkenning en registratie | KNMG](#).

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

If you completed the specialist programme less than 5 years ago, your employment from the time of your completion of the programme will be examined. If you completed the specialist programme more than 5 years ago, we will only examine your employment in the 5 years prior to your application. If you completed the specialist programme less than 3 months ago, we will not assess whether you have practised your medical specialty to a sufficient extent.

## **2.5 Continuing medical education**

In the event that 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 your specialty each year in the five years up to applying to register.

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

We will therefore request an overview of continuing medical education which clearly states for each educational 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 we request such.

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

### 3.1 Compensating measure

If we decide that the programme you took is not equivalent to the Dutch programme, we will assess whether the deficiencies can be compensated for by means of a compensating measure. The compensating measure lasts a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 3 years and must be taken at a training institution and under the supervision of a trainer recognised by us.

It is your own responsibility to find a training institution<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 we have approved the compensation programme as provided by the trainer.

### 3.2 Individual training programme

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

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

An ISP must be taken at a training institution and under the supervision of a trainer recognised by us. An ISP can also be taken under supervision of a registered specialist who is not recognised as a trainer if a recognised trainer is available for consultation.

The ISP can only begin once we have 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. Covering the training fee and your salary are therefore a matter between you and the training institution.

<sup>2</sup> There is a different procedure for general practitioners / 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 us 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, we ask you to announce this to us at least 4 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 authorised to practise medicine in the Netherlands. Hence, 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.

### 4.2 Documents

If your qualification is eligible for automatic recognition, we ask the following documents:

- a certified copy of the specialist qualification;
- the filled out and signed announcement form for provision of temporary or occasional services, available on request;
- a certificate of good standing;
- a copy of the employment contract with your intended employer;
- proof that you are licensed to practise medicine by the BIG register for doctors (see 4.1).

If your qualification is not eligible for automatic recognition, we also ask for:

- the official curriculum for the specialty in question;
- an overview of your specialist training and a list of operations (only for surgical specialties);
- documents concerning your experience as a practicing specialist and continuing medical education after obtaining your qualification.

### 4.3 Decision

If you satisfy the requirements, we 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. Service providers are, however, subject to Dutch disciplinary legal measures.

Note that having your specialty entered in the BIG register for doctors is required to obtain a so called AGB code. Learn more via [AGB-register | Vektis.nl](https://www.agb-register.nl). Confer with your employer if this is necessary.

<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 us, the Registratiecommissie Geneeskundig Specialisten (RGS, the Medical Registration Council) of the Koninklijke Nederlandsche Maatschappij tot bevordering der Geneeskunst (KNMG, the Royal Dutch Medical Association).

When it comes to holders of foreign qualifications, we collaborate with the CIBG . 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 can also indicate your desire for recognition and registration as a specialist. If you do so, we will email you a letter listing the documents that we require, an application form and an invoice. Holders of a qualification that is eligible for automatic recognition are invited to use our online portal MijnRGS.

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

Holders of a qualification that is eligible for automatic recognition are invited to use our online portal MijnRGS.

Other applicants can submit an application or service provision report by sending us an email. 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 qualification.

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

## 6 Procedure

### 6.1 General

When you submit an application to us to be registered as a specialist, you actually submit 2 applications: one for the recognition of your professional qualifications and one for your registration. We handle both applications simultaneously to ensure the most efficient processing possible.

### 6.2 Additional information

We check if your application is complete, or if any documents that are required for its assessment are missing. In the latter case, we will send you an email requesting that you submit the additional documentation within a period of 4 weeks.

If you do not respond, and we are unable to assess your application on the basis of the available documents, then we may decide not to handle your application. In that case, you will not be registered as a specialist.

### 6.3 Decision-making

If we determine that your professional qualifications meet the criteria for recognition *and* you satisfy the requirements for registration, you will be registered. The commencement date of the registration is the same as the date of the decision.

If we determine that your professional qualifications do not meet the criteria for recognition or you do not satisfy the requirements for registration, you will receive a letter from us detailing our decision. You will also be given the opportunity to respond within 4 weeks, before we take a final decision. You can do so either in writing or in person. During this period, you may also still submit additional documents.

After receiving your opinion, or if you have not responded within 4 weeks, we will take a final decision on your application based on all information available to us at that time.

### 6.4 Decision period

In the case of automatic recognition, a decision will be taken on the application for recognition and registration within 3 months. In the case of a substantive assessment, we will take a decision on the applications within 4 months.

During the period in which we give you the opportunity to submit additional documentation these periods will be suspended.

### 6.5 Objection

If you disagree with our final decision, you may lodge a notice of objection with us within 6 weeks of the date of the decision. If we receive your notice of objection after this period has ended, it will not be handled and the decision will remain unchanged.

Provided that a notice of objection has been submitted on time, it will be presented to the Advisory Committee. This independent committee advises us on the decision to be taken on the objection. The Advisory Committee will schedule a hearing in which you can explain your objection. We will also attend this hearing in order to explain our decision.

Following receipt of the Advisory Committee's advice, we will take a decision on the objection. The period for taking the decision on the objection is 12 weeks, starting from the date of the end of the period for submission of the notice of objections. We may extend this period once only by 6 weeks.

### **6.6 Appeal to a court**

If you disagree with the decision on your objection, you may lodge an appeal against it with the administrative-law sector of the court. The court must receive the appeal within 6 weeks of the date of our decision on the objection. If the court receives the appeal after this period has ended, the decision on the objection will remain unchanged.

### **6.7 Procedure for the provision of services on a temporary and occasional basis**

If you plan to provide services in the Netherlands on a temporary and occasional basis, the procedure to be followed will be much the same as described in 6.1 up to and including 6.5.

The outcome of the procedure may be that we permit you to provide services on a temporary or occasional basis. In that case, we will mention the period for which the permission applies. If you want to continue providing services, you must notify us within that period. We will then re-start a procedure for the assessment of your notification.

If we decide not to permit you to provide services, you will be given the opportunity to submit an explanation of your opinion before we take a final decision, as described in 6.3.

Within one month we will take a decision on your notification that you wish to provide services on a temporary or occasional basis.

## Annex 1: Regulations

You can find the following information on the KNMG website:

- Besluit Buitenslands gediplomeerden van het CGS.
- Regeling specialismen en profielen geneeskunst van de KNMG.
- Kaderbesluit CGS.
- 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:

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

### Profielen:

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

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