



Professional registration checks

There are six employment check standards that employers must undertake as part of their recruitment processes.

Read the background information about the purpose of the standards, who they apply to and how to meet compliance. We also recommend viewing our frequently asked questions.

We regularly review and update the standards in line with policy and legislation changes. A summary of updates history can be found at the bottom of this page.

This standard sets out the requirements to verify the professional registration (where relevant to the post) and qualification checks that need to be carried out for all prospective NHS employees.

2.1 Minimum requirements

2.1.1 Employers must check the registration of all healthcare professionals with the appropriate regulatory body before allowing the individual to start employment. This will verify that:

- the individual is actually the person registered with that regulatory body
- there are no restrictions to their registration that would affect their ability to undertake the duties of the role being offered
- there are no pending investigations on their fitness to practise that must be considered by the employer.

2.1.2 Employers must have the consent of the individual and their registration number to check their registration and fitness to practise.

2.1.3 Checking an individual's professional registration in itself does not guarantee their suitability for a role, employers must always seek the necessary assurances by carrying out the full range of checks outlined in the other NHS Employment Check Standards.

2.1.4 Where relevant to the role, it should be made a contractual condition for individual's to maintain any registration that might be relevant to their profession for the full term of employment.

2.1.5 It will also be essential for employers to have appropriate mechanisms in place to respond to any actions that a regulatory body may take which would affect an individual's registration or fitness to practise.

2.1.6 Further information about how to check registration, license and fitness to practise with each of the regulatory bodies can be found via the links below:

[General Medical Council \(GMC\)](#)

[General Dental Council \(GDC\)](#)

[Nursing and Midwifery Council \(NMC\)](#)

[General Optical Council \(GOC\)](#)

[Health and Care Professions Council \(HCPC\)](#)

[General Chiropractic Council \(GCC\)](#)

[General Pharmaceutical Council \(GphC\)](#)

[General Osteopathic Council \(GOsC\)](#)

2.1.7 Employers must also check that there is no known information held about registered healthcare professionals on the healthcare professional alert notice (HPAN) system. If an individual is subject to an alert notice, then employers must check whether there are any restrictions which would prevent them from undertaking the duties of the role, before allowing them to

commence employment. See further information about the HPAN system in section 6.

2.2 Recruiting from the European Union (EU)

2.2.1 Following the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020, the EU Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (which enabled healthcare professional regulators to recognise certain EEA-awarded professional qualifications with minimal barriers via a near-automatic system) no longer applies in the UK.

2.2.2 In 2023 the Department of Health and Social Care worked with professional regulatory bodies, the Devolved Administrations, NHS England and others to review the legislation relating to automatic recognition of EEA and Swiss qualifications. A [report](#) on the review was published on 29th June 2023 confirming that EEA professional qualifications will continue to be recognised under standstill arrangements for a temporary period of five years. The Department will determine whether to carry out a further review of the operation of the standstill provisions in 5 years' time, as part of its wider programme of regulatory reform.

2.2.3 As such, UK healthcare professional regulators will continue to recognise EEA qualifications listed in the [EU Directive](#) as evidence of skills, knowledge and experience regardless of the individual's country of origin.

2.2.4 Different arrangements are in place for Swiss nationals, who benefit from a four-year grace period from 01 January 2021 during which they will be treated in the same way as pre-31/12/20 EEA individuals based on their nationality, not their place of qualification.

2.2.5 Under a separate agreement that came into force on 1 December 2023, regulators are now required to put processes in place to recognise comparable professional qualifications obtained in Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

2.2.6 Professional regulatory bodies will continue to assess and approve any qualification that is not entitled to automatic recognition. Employers should be extra vigilant in checking applications from an individual with EEA professional registration and qualifications, to ensure they are appropriately registered and qualified to undertake the type and range of duties required for a particular role.

2.2.7 EEA-qualified healthcare professionals who were registered to practise in the UK prior to the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020 continue to have their recognition decision acknowledged.

2.3 Unregulated practitioners

2.3.1 The Accredited Registers programme, managed by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA), offers employers a way to ensure that practitioners who are not regulated by law still meet high standards in education, skills and behaviour.

2.3.2 The programme provides employers with access to online registers of practitioners who have been vetted. Employers can make informed decisions when recruiting, with the assurance that new employees have the necessary qualifications and experience to provide safe and effective care to patients. They have also signed up to ethical standards and professional codes of conduct.

2.3.3 The PSA assesses organisations holding registers of practitioners working in unregulated roles to make sure they meet their Standards of Accredited Registers. The Standards align to those of the statutory regulators, in areas such as governance,

registration and complaints handling. While Accredited Registers cannot prevent someone from practising or using a title, they can issue sanctions to protect the public, including exclusion ('strike off') from a register and making this information publicly available.

2.3.4 While not compulsory for unregulated practitioners to be on an Accredited Register, there are benefits for employers choosing to recruit from practitioners on a Register. There are also benefits to employers in encouraging employees to join a Register; these includes practitioners having access to professional standards for their occupation, a continuing professional development (CPD) framework and professional networking opportunities with their peers. Many organisations holding Accredited Registers are also professional bodies.

2.3.5 Employers should carry out the same level of checks to verify the registration of healthcare professionals on the Accredited Registers as they would for any other healthcare professional on a statutory register.

2.3.6 For some unregulated roles, the NHS is starting to require registration with specific Accredited Registers as a condition of employment. This is the case for some psychological professional roles that are not regulated by law.

2.3.7 The PSA continually assesses and accredits new Registers, bringing more unregulated roles into the assurance framework that the programme provides. Employers can identify and refer to relevant Accredited Registers within job adverts and personal specifications to ensure they do not prevent appropriately registered individuals from being considered for a role.

2.3.8 The PSA [Check a Practitioner](#) tool is a useful way to find out who is on an Accredited Register.