

The Professional Qualifications Bill: An Overview

The Professional Qualifications Bill revokes the current EU-based system for recognising professional qualifications gained overseas and establishes a new approach based on regulator autonomy and supporting delivery of international agreements.

Ending unequal, EU-based arrangements: The UK's current system for recognising professional qualifications gained overseas gives preferential treatment to holders of qualifications from the European Economic Area and Switzerland. These arrangements are unreciprocated and were never meant to run indefinitely. Now the UK has taken back control of its laws, the Bill will revoke rules based on the EU approach, giving more autonomy to UK regulators to decide on the right approach to recognition of overseas professional qualifications, tailored to suit the needs of their profession.

Delivering a Global Britain: The Bill strengthens the UK's ability to negotiate and deliver ambitious arrangements on the recognition of professional qualifications with current and future trade partners. It means we can further empower UK regulators to strike deals on recognition with their overseas counterparts, helping UK professionals get their qualifications recognised internationally. This will help spread UK skills, knowledge and innovation across the globe, and boost UK businesses exporting services.

Helping professionals to enter new markets: The Bill will help aspiring professionals understand how to access UK professions; and it will help UK professionals seeking to get their qualifications recognised to practise overseas. The end of EU-based rules and new trade deals mean the landscape is changing – new transparency requirements, and the continued provision of an Assistance Centre will help professionals to navigate it. The government will consult and work in partnership with regulators to uphold their autonomy and UK standards, and to ensure the new approach remains up to date as the landscape develops further.

Regulator autonomy: For all aspects of the Bill the government considers regulator autonomy in upholding UK standards and making assessments against them to be paramount.

Smooth working arrangements for recognition of professional qualifications across the UK: The Bill will apply to the entirety of the UK and, in line with the devolution settlements, and provide for the devolved administrations to make regulations within devolved competence.