

## **Internships and Certificates of Experience – Impact upon registration opportunities in Ireland and EU (Revised 26<sup>th</sup> April 2016)**

### **Q: What is a Certificate of Experience?**

**A:** In Ireland, a certificate of experience is a document which confirms that a doctor has successfully completed their internship in accordance with the [Standards](#), [Guidelines](#) and [Rules](#) set by the Medical Council.

### **Q: Who issues Certificates of Experience in Ireland?**

**A:** Prior to May 2011, it was the responsibility of the Deans of the Medical Schools to issue certificates of experience. These certificates were issued directly to the Medical Council, and were processed by Council as part of the documentation which is required in order to register doctors to practice in Ireland.

Since May 2011, it is the responsibility of the Irish Medical Council to issue certificates of experience. Before accepting this responsibility, as per the requirements of the Medical Practitioners Act (MPA) 2007, Council was required to inspect all clinical sites in the State which support the delivery of intern training. Such inspections are conducted under Section 49(3) of the MPA and details of the clinical sites which have been approved for the purposes of intern training can be found [here](#).

The Medical Council engages with the six intern training networks annually to confirm the details of those interns who have successfully completed their training, and who are therefore eligible to receive a certificate of experience.

### **Q: How do I request a Certificate of Experience?**

**A:** Interns who intend to complete their intern training and continue their medical careers in jurisdictions *other* than Ireland may be asked to produce a copy of their certificate of experience as part of the registration requirements in those jurisdictions. If you wish to request a certificate, you can do so by logging into your [online registration account](#).

If you intend to continue your career in Ireland immediately after completing intern training, you will not be required to produce a certificate of experience as part of the registration process as this information will already have been received by Council on your behalf.

### **Q: How soon into my intern training can I request my Certificate of Experience?**

**A:** The Medical Council will endeavour to generate your certificate of experience approximately four weeks *before* the anticipated completion date of your final rotation. Please note that this is wholly dependent upon the Medical Council receiving a formal confirmation from your Intern Network Co-ordinator that your training has progressed satisfactorily and that you should be issued with a certificate.

Please note that interns are required to meet the requirements of the National Intern Training Programme (NITP) and the National Intern Training and Education Agreement (NIETA). It is the responsibility of each intern to ensure that all requested documentation is returned to their training network in a timely fashion, and that all specified training courses are completed.

If a certificate of experience has already been issued to an intern who then does not proceed to meet all requirements of the NITP, the NIETA and their training network, the Medical Council may then take steps to contact other regulatory authorities to effectively 'withdraw' that intern's certificate of experience.

**Q: What is Basic Medical Training (BMT)?**

**A:** In accordance with the [EC Directive 2005/36/EC](#), BMT is the combination of a Basic Medical Qualification (BMQ), obtained on graduation, with an accompanying certificate, if specified. In Ireland, the accompanying certificate is the certificate of experience. Within the EC, doctors who have completed BMT are entitled to *automatic* recognition of their qualifications in other Member States. Further details of accompanying certificates specified in other Member States can be found in Annex 5.1.1 of the Directive. Please note that in order to benefit from the *automatic* recognition of qualifications, a specified accompanying document must be issued by the same jurisdiction in which the BMQ was awarded.

**Q. What are the implications of not completing BMT?**

**A:** Doctors who have not completed BMT may be required to pass a pre-registration examination, or otherwise have their skills and competence assessed as part of the registration requirements of individual Member States. In addition, such doctors may be ineligible to pursue certain types of registration in Member States. Registration requirements differ between Member States and are determined by national legislation and registration policy. Please refer to the Table A on the following page for further information on the impact of intern training / completion of BMT on registration options in Ireland.

**Q: What are the implications of leaving an intern post before training has been completed?**

**A:** If you are considering leaving an intern post early (for example, to pursue a residency position in another jurisdiction), you will not be eligible to receive a certificate of experience; therefore there may be implications on future registration options in Ireland and other Member States as per the guidance above and Table A below. Please note that if you resign from an intern training post, you will be ineligible to apply for further intern training in Ireland.

If you are considering leaving an intern post, you should liaise fully with your Intern Network Co-ordinator to ensure that all parties, including your fellow interns, are given appropriate notice of your intentions. This is to minimise the potential impact on the delivery of clinical service, and to allow your employers and colleagues every opportunity to revise on-call rotas etc.

Similarly, if you accept a training post but then decide not to commence employment in that post, please provide as much notice as possible of your intentions to your employer and to your Intern Network Co-ordinator.

It should also be noted that interns who cannot complete their internship due to illness or maternity leave will be facilitated by their Intern Training Network, and by the Health Service Executive, to complete their training.

**Q: What Non-EU intern training is equivalent to intern training completed in Ireland?**

**A:** Applicants for General registration with the Medical Council, who do not benefit from the automatic recognition of their qualifications under EU legislation, may be required to pass the Pre-Registration Examination System (PRES). However, applicants for General registration may be exempted from the PRES if they can establish that they have completed internship training, and been awarded a Certificate of Experience (or equivalent), in a jurisdiction whose standards have been deemed to be *equivalent* to the standards applied in Ireland. Applicants for the Trainee Specialist Division (TSD) must hold an acceptable Certificate of Experience (or equivalent) in addition to passing or being exempt from the PRES.

The Council established an Adjudication Group in 2011 to review responses received from competent authorities, and to make recommendations to Council, in respect of the equivalence (or otherwise) of internships completed in non-EU jurisdictions. The standards applied as a benchmark in each assessment are the Medical Council's "*Standards for Training and Experience required for the Granting of a Certificate of Experience to an Intern*".

Council has accepted the following recommendations from the Adjudication Group -

**Equivalent:**

1. **Australia** – Standards for intern training and experience comply with the Council's criteria, and internship training is recognised as equivalent to a Certificate of Experience awarded in Ireland.
2. **New Zealand** - Standards for intern training and experience comply with the Council's criteria, and internship training is recognised as equivalent to a Certificate of Experience awarded in Ireland.
3. **Pakistan** - Internship training will be recognised as equivalent to a Certificate of Experience awarded in Ireland if the applicant commenced their internship after 31st December 2008 and the rotations comply with the Medical Council's policy on length of internship and approved rotations.
4. **South Africa** - Internship training will be recognised as equivalent to a Certificate of Experience awarded in Ireland if the applicant commenced their internship from 1st July 2006.
5. **Sudan** – Standards for intern training and experience comply with the Council's criteria, and internship training is recognised as equivalent to a Certificate of Experience awarded in Ireland.
6. **Malaysia** - Standards for intern training and experience comply with the Council's criteria, and internship training is recognised as equivalent to a Certificate of Experience awarded in Ireland.

**Not Equivalent:**

7. **India** - Internships do not meet the Medical Council's Standards for Training and Experience required for the Granting of a Certificate of Experience to an Intern.
8. **Trinidad & Tobago** - Internships do not meet the Medical Council's Standards for Training and Experience required for the Granting of a Certificate of Experience to an Intern.

Please note that there is no longer a process within the Medical Council to assess the equivalence of *individual* internships. Assessments for equivalence are completed on a jurisdictional basis, following engagement between the Medical Council and national regulators in non-EU countries.

**Table A: Internships - Impact on Registration in Ireland**

	<b>Graduated</b>	<b>Internship</b>	<b>Division</b>	<b>Registration Eligibility</b>
1	Ireland	Ireland	General Division	Eligible; PRES exempt
			Trainee Specialist Division	Eligible; PRES exempt
2	Ireland	Completed in another country and recognised as equivalent by Council	General Division	Eligible; PRES exempt
			Trainee Specialist Division	Eligible; PRES required
3	Ireland	Completed in another country and <b>NOT</b> recognised as equivalent by Council	General Division	Eligible; PRES required
			Trainee Specialist Division	Not eligible; no access to TSD
4	EU	EU compliant	General Division	Eligible; PRES exempt
			Trainee Specialist Division	Eligible; PRES exempt
5	EU	Completed in another EU country	General Division	Eligible; PRES exempt
			Trainee Specialist Division	Eligible; PRES required
6	EU degree only	None	General Division	Eligible; PRES required
			Trainee Specialist Division	Not eligible; no access to TSD
7	Third Country	Internship accepted as equivalent by Council	General Division	Eligible; PRES exempt
			Trainee Specialist Division	Eligible; PRES required
8	Third Country	Internship <b>NOT</b> accepted as equivalent by Council	General Division	Eligible; PRES required
			Trainee Specialist Division	Not eligible; no access to TSD
9	Third Country	No internship	General Division	Eligible; PRES required
			Trainee Specialist Division	Not eligible; no access to TSD