



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health +
Social Care Professionals

Period of Adaptation Guidance Notes



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Period of Adaptation – Guidance Notes

Introduction

Directive 2005/36/EC provides a mechanism for compensation measures to be imposed in cases where professional qualifications obtained outside of the Republic of Ireland (ROI) differ substantially in duration and content from the standards of proficiency required for graduates from an Irish approved qualification and for subsequent entry to the Register.

The standards of proficiency are the knowledge, skills, competencies and professional qualities that are required of graduates from an approved programme for the safe and appropriate practice of the profession. They are the minimum standards for entry to the profession. Applicants must read the relevant standards of proficiency for their profession as part of the recognition process. These are available on www.coru.ie

The domains for all CORU regulated professions are as follows:

1. Professional autonomy and accountability
2. Interpersonal and professional relationships
3. Effective communication
4. Personal and professional development
5. Provision of quality service
6. Knowledge, understanding and skills

If a Registration Board determines substantial differences (deficits) exist between the professional qualification submitted by an applicant for recognition and the standards of proficiency, a decision letter will be issued to the applicant. An applicant can be offered the choice between a period of supervised practice called a 'period of adaptation' (POA) and an aptitude test in order to make up a specific deficit. When the Board has determined successful completion of the compensation measure, recognition of the professional qualification can be granted. Applicants may then be considered for registration in that profession once all other criteria have been satisfied.

An applicant for recognition of professional qualifications must meet the standards of proficiency in order to be considered a safe and effective practitioner.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to applicants who are undertaking a period of adaptation and supervisors providing a period of adaptation as part of the process for recognition of professional qualifications.



Further information on Directive 2005/36/EC

Please also refer to the general guidance on Directive 2005/36/EC included in your pack. You can also find further more detailed information about Directive 2005/36/EC on the European Commission website: www.ec.europa.eu.

Overview - Period of adaptation (POA)

In accordance with Directive 2005/36/EC, a period of adaptation (POA) is a period of supervised practice under the responsibility of a qualified member of the profession.

The POA may be supplemented with additional independently assessed academic training.

A POA is an opportunity for applicants to address deficits in clinical skills and improve supporting theoretical knowledge where substantial differences exist between professional qualifications and the standards of proficiency required for a graduate from an Irish approved qualification and entry to the Register.

Its purpose is that following the completion of a POA the applicant can work safely and effectively at least at the same standard of a new graduate from an Irish approved programme.

The Registration Board (the Board) determines the nature, scope and duration of the POA.

The areas of deficit which the Board identified in the applicant's decision letter with regard to the standards of proficiency are essential in determining the learning objectives for the applicant on a POA. This letter should be closely read by both the supervisor and applicant.

Assessment outcomes

The POA will be the subject of assessment. The Registration Board will ultimately decide whether or not the standards of proficiency have been met. Normally, an applicant who fails a POA will be offered one opportunity to repeat. If the applicant does not meet the required standards of proficiency they will be refused recognition.

Duration of period of adaptation

The POA will be for a defined period of time. The duration of a POA cannot exceed three years. The Board will determine the length of the POA and will outline this in the applicant's decision letter.



Timelines

An applicant must decide on their choice of POA within 30 days of receiving a decision letter from the Board which outlines the compensation measures. The applicant must confirm the choice of POA in writing to CORU and this must then be commenced within 18 months.

Approval for a period of adaptation

The Registration Board must approve all POAs before they can commence. The applicant must receive approval of a POA proposal in writing. For further details on how to obtain approval for a POA please see section page 7.

Costs

The applicant is liable for any expenses incurred, both professional and / or personal when undertaking a POA.

Location

All POA's must be located in the Republic of Ireland.

Suitable periods of adaptation

It is the applicant's responsibility to locate a POA site and supervisor willing to provide a suitable period of adaptation to address any deficit(s) identified.

There is no obligation to provide a POA. Providing a POA will be determined by workload and resource pressures so there will be times when a POA cannot be offered. CORU is unable to provide any funding for POA's. A POA must offer applicants an opportunity to address the deficit(s) in the standards of proficiency and become safe, competent practitioners willing to accept personal and professional accountability for their work. Learning must be integrated into practice through the experience and supervision offered by a structured POA within a professional setting.

It is essential that the duration and scope of a POA addresses the deficit(s) outlined in the applicant's decision letter from the Registration Board.

Indicators of suitability

Please note this list is not exhaustive and approval for a POA is by the Registration Board on submission of the POA proposal form.

A POA site is suitable if:



- The period of adaptation is in the Republic of Ireland;
- The POA site proposal is approved by the Registration Board;
- The scope and duration of the POA is appropriate to support the applicant in addressing the area (s) of deficit outlined in the decision letter from the Registration Board;
- The POA site reflects the scope of the settings, including any statutory settings, in which the profession normally operates;
- The POA site provides a safe and supportive environment, high quality professional practice and opportunities for the applicant to experience direct contact with service users;
- The POA site provides the appropriate support and supervision and the applicant is working under the supervision of a qualified member of the profession at all times;
- Supervisors have the relevant professional and academic qualifications, practice experience and competence in the area which they are supervising;
- The POA is based on the need to integrate theory and practice and to facilitate the progressive development of the applicant in addressing the deficits outlined in the decision letter from the Registration Board;
- The environment is such that the applicant will receive exposure to the required role and work as part the relevant team as appropriate.

Attendance

Full 100% attendance is required during the period of adaptation. This should be as per normal working hours of a full time member from the profession. Any absences should be notified to the supervisor and any holiday periods agreed in advance and documented in the learning agreement. Sick leave should be medically certified. Periods of absence must be addressed by extending the duration of the POA such that the total number of hours of the POA is equal to that indicated in the decision letter from the Board.

Supervision

The requirements for supervision while on a POA will be similar to those for a practice teacher supervising a student on practice placement for an Irish approved qualification in the profession.

If the POA occurs within the two-year transitional period (the two year period after the Register opens) then it may be supervised by a registrant from the profession or another qualified person who is practising in the State. If the POA occurs after the end of the two-year transitional period then it must be supervised by a registrant of the profession.



POAs must be facilitated at management level and any necessary physical (personal office / desk) and administrative support must be in place (secretarial / PC) where relevant to the profession.

Please also refer to the profession specific information below:

Social Workers

A period of adaptation shall be a period of supervised practice under the responsibility of a qualified member of the profession, who has a minimum of two years post-qualifying experience.

Supervision of the applicant should take place at a minimum of once a week at a fixed time and should last for at least 1.5 hours per session.

Radiographers / Radiation Therapists

A period of adaptation shall be a period of supervised practice under the responsibility of a qualified member of the profession, who has a minimum of three years post-qualifying experience.

Potential mandatory training requirements

Local policy may also require the applicant to complete compulsory training **before** commencing a POA. Applicants should be informed by the POA site of any such requirements and any mandatory training should not be commenced until the POA proposal is approved by the Registration Board.

Induction

Supervisors should ensure applicants undertake an initial orientation period to include the local policies and procedures of the POA site. The applicant should abide by all relevant policies and procedures. Proof of identity (e.g. copy of passport) should be provided to the supervisor prior to beginning a POA.

Overview of the POA process

Applicant chooses a POA

On receipt of the decision letter from the Registration Board, the applicant is required to choose either the POA or the aptitude test within 30 days and confirm this in writing.

Templates

On confirmation, a **POA pack** will issue to the applicant for use by the supervisor and applicant:



- Standards of proficiency
- POA proposal form
- Guidance notes
- Supervisor report
- Applicant report
- Formal meeting record templates
- Clinical log (if relevant)
- Self-directed learning log (if relevant)

Templates provided must be used as they provide for ease of use, consistency, accountability and transparency. Applicants must provide this information to their supervisor

It is recommended that when contacting potential POA sites that applicants send a cover letter, the decision letter from the Registration Board, CV and the POA pack.

The inclusion of the decision letter is to enable potential supervisors to see if they can assist applicants in achieving the learning's required to address the deficit (s) identified. The acceptance of an applicant for a POA is at the discretion of the specific POA site and supervisor.

POA proposal / learning agreement

On opting for a POA, a proposal form will issue from CORU as part of the applicant POA pack. This is completed by the applicant and the proposed supervisor, co-signed by both parties and submitted to the Registration Board for approval.

This proposal form must be submitted to the Registration Board in advance of any commencement of a POA. Notification of approval to commence will issue in writing from CORU. In the event of the POA being approved this proposal will form the basis of a learning agreement.

The learning goals identified in the learning agreement should be specific and measurable with timeframes included. They must be aligned with specific learning outcomes / results so that applicants can understand what they are being asked to achieve. Supervisors must consider what is achievable with available resources and the time required to provide clarity for the Registration Board when seeking approval for POA proposals.

On approval this will then act as the learning agreement and will document learning needs, objectives, resources and learning strategies for the applicant. It will act as baseline for the evaluation of progress during the POA. The applicant's workload during the POA should be designed to address the specific deficit(s) outlined by the Registration Board.



On sourcing a suitable POA, it is recommended that the applicant and proposed supervisor arrange a preliminary meeting to complete the POA proposal form and to discuss the following:

- applicant's decision letter and recommendations from the Registration Board
- expectations while on placement
- the structure and set up for the proposed POA
- local policy requirements
- seek suggestions on recommended reading / self-directed study
- proof of identity should be requested from the applicant
- any other issues

If the applicant and the supervisor are of the opinion that the POA site will enable the deficits to be addressed, the next step will be for the POA supervisor to send a completed and co-signed POA proposal form to CORU for approval by the Registration Board.

Assessment

A POA will be subject to assessment in all areas of deficit as outlined in the decision letter from the Registration Board. On completion of the POA, applicants will be expected to demonstrate they have met the standard(s) of proficiency where deficit(s) have been identified in the professional qualification. Applicants must pass the POA in order to have a professional qualification recognised.

The assessment process will take into account:

- Registration Board decision letter and recommendations for the applicants POA
- required minimum standards of proficiency

Supervisor role in the assessment process

Supervisors will assess applicants on the POA to determine if in their opinion the deficit(s) identified in the standards of proficiency have been addressed.

On-going assessment should be carried while the applicant is on POA and assessment methods set out and discussed at the beginning of the POA.

Supervision should seek to ascertain and compile evidence of whether the relevant deficits have been addressed or not. This evidence will be necessary for the supervisor's report which will be completed at the end of the POA and submitted to the Registration Board for approval.

The supervisor will complete a supervisor's report at the end of the POA which will document assessment against the relevant standards of proficiency.



On-going meetings

To facilitate the assessment and learning process while on a period of adaptation it is recommended that there is a formal structure of meetings. Regular, on-going meetings should take place between the applicant and supervisor.

A schedule for performance review should be established from the outset and the applicant provided with timely feedback throughout. Records of performance should be maintained.

It is recommended that at minimum the following formal meetings take place during the POA:

Initial meeting

- This meeting should take place between the supervisor and the applicant within the first week to discuss induction plan and implementing the POA proposal / learning agreement as approved by the Board.
- The initial meeting is recorded by the supervisor on the initial POA meeting template provided.

Interim meeting / review of POA

- This should occur midway on the POA.
- An interim review of progress against the deficit(s) identified must be completed by the supervisor before this meeting. This will form the basis of the discussion at this meeting with the applicant.
- The learning agreement must be examined in light of progress in order to determine if there is any reason for a lack of progress and whether learning needs, objectives and strategies need to be re-examined. An action plan must be drawn up to address the lack of progress.
- In the event of the applicant's progress not being satisfactory there may be a requirement for a third party from the profession to attend the intermediate meeting. This should be another fully qualified person from the profession.
- This meeting is recorded by the supervisor on the interim POA review template.

Final meeting

- The final meeting will take place during the final week of the POA.
- 100% attendance is required on the POA before this meeting can take place.
- This meeting is attended by the supervisor and the applicant but a third party from the profession may attend in the event of:
 - Problems being identified during the intermediate meeting or during the POA



- At the applicant or supervisor request
- The applicant not having addressed the required standards of proficiency during the POA
- The final meeting is recorded by the supervisor on the final POA meeting template provided.

These meetings must be recorded on the templates provided. However, for longer periods of adaptation, additional formal meetings may also be required.

Meetings should be held in private, free from disturbance. Additional on-going meetings should be documented as appropriate by the supervisor and co-signed.

The proposed format and schedule of meetings should be outlined in the POA proposal which will act as the learning agreement.

Final reports / sign off by supervisor

On the completion of the POA the applicant and supervisor will submit final signed reports to CORU.

Applicant report

The applicant will complete an applicant report detailing appropriate evidence of their role and workload, training opportunities, research tasks during the POA and the learning's which have been achieved while on the POA. This evidence should be clear and concise and also address meeting the standards of proficiency for the profession and the deficits identified in the decision letter.

The applicant will submit this report to the supervisor for review and signature on completion of the POA.

Supervisors report and recommendation

Following completion of a POA, the supervisor will complete a final report for submission to the Registration Board.

This report will document evidence on how the deficits in the standard(s) of proficiency have been addressed. The supervisor will state one of the following:

- The applicant has successfully addressed the deficits identified in the decision letter regarding the standard(s) of proficiency.
- The applicant has not addressed the deficits identified in the decision letter regarding the standard(s) of proficiency.



The supervisor will send the co-signed applicant report, co-signed supervisor report and meeting records sheets (to include interim review) to the Registration Board for assessment as soon as practical.

Completing the supervisors report

A Registration Board will need to be able to see clear, concise and unambiguous evidence in a supervisor's report to demonstrate that following the completion of a POA, an applicant has in the opinion of the supervisor, met or not met the standards of proficiency where deficits have been identified.

The applicant must address all deficits and meet the required standards of proficiency by the end of the period of adaptation in order for a supervisor to recommend successful completion of this to the Registration Board.

Supervisors will be required to document evidence and the source of this evidence against each of the standards of proficiency where deficits have been identified in the applicant's decision letter. This must clearly identify how the applicant has demonstrated meeting or not meeting the standards of proficiency through their competence, skill development and depth of practice.

A concluding statement must also be given against each standard being reported on to clearly state that the applicant has met or not met the standard of proficiency.

It is very important that when the supervisor and applicant reports are submitted following the end of the period of adaptation that they provide sufficient evidence to the Board that the specific learning outcomes identified in the pre-approved learning agreement have been achieved and that all the deficits in the standards of proficiency have been addressed by the applicant.

It is also important that any recommendations from the supervisor match any content included in the report and contradictions or ambiguity are to be avoided. Any overall conclusion must be supported by the content within the report.

A supervisor may also document weaknesses in the case of applicants meeting the standards to show development and in this case it is important to document evidence of how these have been overcome.

Supervisors are required to document against the standards of proficiency where a deficit has been identified in the applicant's decision letter. However, if there are areas of serious concern in the applicant's professional training that demonstrate an applicant does not meet other standards, this should also be documented.



Source of evidence:

The Board will wish to see evidence of how the applicant met the standard as demonstrated by a measurable output and the source of how this evidence is gathered. Examples of how supervisors can gather evidence are listed below. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

- Direct supervision sessions
- Observation of practice
- Service user feedback
- Reflective diary
- Work summaries
- Reflective summaries
- Professional feedback
- Case recording if relevant to the profession

Registration Board – assessment and final decision

The documentation submitted by the applicant and supervisor on completion of the POA will be assessed by a member of the Registration Board's panel of assessors. The assessor will make a recommendation to the Registration Board confirming one of the following:

- The applicant has successfully addressed the deficits identified in the decision letter regarding the standard(s) of proficiency.
- The applicant has not addressed the deficits identified in the decision letter regarding the standard(s) of proficiency.

The Registration Board will review the recommendation of the assessor and make a final decision accordingly. The Registration Board will issue a decision letter to the applicant as soon as practicable.

Successful completion of a POA

In the event of a successful completion of the POA the Registration Board will issue a letter of recognition to the applicant.

Repeating a POA

In the event of a POA being unsuccessful the Registration Board will offer the applicant the opportunity to repeat once only. This repeat will be subject to the same procedure as the initial POA and must be approved by the Registration Board before commencing.



Safety / conduct concerns

If a supervisor has any concerns regarding public health and safety about the applicant's performance or conduct, the POA should be suspended. Within 24 hours the applicant and the supervisor should submit a detailed report to CORU.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.

Further clarifications

Further clarifications or additional information may be requested by the Registration Board from the supervisor or applicant in order to conduct the assessment of the POA.

Learning strategies while on a period of adaptation

The aim of a POA is to address deficit(s) between professional qualifications and the standards of proficiency.

The following list contains recommended learning strategies. This is a general list and is not exhaustive, no single strategy exists and it is recommended that a combination of strategies is used appropriate to the learning outcomes required.

It is recommended that the POA site advise applicants on relevant, up to date reading lists and guidelines on self-directed study.

- Recommended reading lists for the profession
- Direct supervision for initial tasks and or patient / client contact so that the applicant's skills are assessed with a view to indirect supervision
- Direct observation
- Self-directed study
- Shadowing
- Reflective discussions during supervised practice
- Feedback from colleagues / service users
- Problem solving enabling the applicant to assess and manage work in conjunction with peers
- Attendance at multidisciplinary meetings
- Attendance at ward rounds if relevant to the profession
- Attendance and participation in service education as appropriate
- Project work as appropriate



- Case presentation or presentation of topics with POA site in-service programme or other forum as appropriate

Appeals

A decision of the competent authority can be appealed. Information on the appeals procedure is issued with decision letters with an appeals mechanism.