Allocation of responsibilities between

Swiss Red Cross and SERI

Date: January 2016

1 Aim

The present information sheet is intended to orient holders of foreign upper-secondary level vocational qualifications and foreign tertiary-level professional qualifications in the field of health (excl. medical professions) who wish to know whom to contact (Swiss Red Cross or SERI or another authority) to request recognition of their professional qualifications. The answer to this question mainly depends on the field for which the qualification holder was trained in his or her country of origin.

2 Areas of responsibility

2.1 Fields falling under SRC responsibility

The SRC\(^1\) is responsible for the following fields:

Upper-secondary level vocational qualifications:
- Health and social care assistance,
- Podiatry\(^2\).

Tertiary-level professional qualifications:
- Dental hygiene,
- Occupational therapy,
- Nutrition counselling,
- Midwifery,
- Radiologic technology,
- Biomedical analysis,
- Surgical technology,
- Orthoptics,
- Nursing.

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1 https://www.redcross.ch/fr/node/5698.

2 The qualification awarded in this case is a Federal VET Diploma (Eidgenössisches Fähigkeitszeugnis EFZ in German, Certificat fédéral de capacité CFC in French and Attestato federale di capacità AFC in Italian). The Federal VET Diploma is an upper-secondary level qualification issued upon completion of three or four years of training, depending on the occupation in question (ISCED 3)
Physiotherapy, Paramedicine, Podiatry, Massage therapy, Emergency medical services, Naturopathy (homeopathy, Ayurvedic medicine, European Traditional Medicine ETM, traditional Chinese Medicine TCM).

2.2 Fields falling under SERI responsibility

Generally speaking, SERI is responsible for other vocational and professional qualifications as well as qualifications awarded by Swiss UAS. This includes fields relating to those covered by the SRC:

- Health and social care assistance
- Dental assistance,
- Medical assistance,
- Pharmaceutical assistance,
- Veterinary assistance,
- Social work: Federal VET Certificate (ISCED 3), Federal VET Diploma (ISCED 3), Federal Diploma of Higher Education (ISCED 6, non-university) and Bachelor’s degree from UAS (ISCED 6, university),
- Beauty care,
- Laboratory assistance,
- Pharmaceuticals,
- Art therapy (musical therapy, plastic and visual arts therapy, intermedial therapy, theatrical and discursive therapy, movement and dance therapy),
- Complementary therapy (Shiatsu, Ayurveda, Eutony, Yoga).

2.3 Fields falling under the responsibility of other authorities

Other authorities are responsible for the following fields:

- Human medicine, dentistry, pharmaceuticals, veterinary medicine, chiropractic medicine: Federal Office of Public Health’s Medical Professions Commission (MEBEKO);
- Psychomotor therapy: Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK);
- Speech therapy: EDK;
- Psychology and psychotherapy: Psychology Professions Commission (PsyCO);
- Osteopathy: Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Health (GDK).

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3 The qualification in this case is awarded by a Swiss college of higher education. Colleges of higher education (höhere Fachschulen HF in German, écoles supérieures ES in French and scuole specializzate superiori SSS in Italian) are non-university institutions that provide a combination of theory and practical training (ISCED 6).

4 The qualification in this case is awarded by a Swiss university of applied sciences (UAS). Universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen FH in German, hautes écoles spécialisées HES in French and suole universitarie professionali SUP in Italian) are university institutions that provide a combination of theory and practical training (ISCED 6 and ISCED 7).

5 The qualification awarded in this case is a Federal VET Certificate (Eidgenössisches Berufssattest EBA in German, Attestation fédérale de formation professionnelle AFP in French and Certificato federale di formazione pratica CFP in Italian). The Federal VET Certificate is an upper-secondary level qualification issued upon completion of two years of training (ISCED 3).

6 www.bag.admin.ch > Topics > Health professionals.

7 www.cdip.ch.

8 www.bag.admin.ch > thèmes > Professions de la psychologie > Commission des professions de la psychologie (PsyCo).

9 www.gdk-cds.ch > Thèmes > Professions de la santé > Ostéopathie.
3 Who is responsible for which field?

3.1 Reminder of recognition rules

Holders of professional qualifications issued from an EU/EFTA member state are authorised to work in this capacity in Switzerland (Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, included in Annex III of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons\(^\text{10}\)). Neither the duration nor the level of training are determinant factors. Rather, it is the professional activities that the qualification holder has the right to carry out in his or her country of origin. The qualification holder may request that his or her qualification be recognised as equivalent to a corresponding Swiss qualification enabling one to work in the same occupation or profession.

Generally speaking, migrants from third states (i.e. non EU/EFTA member states) are subject to similar rules, with the difference that their training can be compared to a lower level of training under the terms set forth in VPETO\(^\text{11}\) and HEdO\(^\text{12}\), if certain conditions for recognition are not met.

3.2 Who to contact?

Holders of foreign professional qualifications should consider the following:

1. They should know the field for which they were trained in their country of origin and what professional activities are covered by this field.

2. They should find out what training is required in Switzerland in order to work in the same occupation/profession or to carry out the same professional activity. Job descriptions and corresponding training programmes can easily be found over the Internet\(^\text{13}\). This information will enable one to determine which training programmes, occupations and professions in Switzerland are most closely related to the ones in the country of origin.

3. Once this is known, the qualification holder may then contact one of the authorities mentioned in item 2 above.

Example: if a professional is qualified, in his or her country of origin, to nurse and assist sick, disabled or elderly people as the needs and situation require, being attentive to their daily routine, living circumstances and surroundings, applying certain treatments and, under the responsibility of nursing staff, performing simple medical-technical acts\(^\text{14}\), then he or she must contact the SRC to request that his/her qualification be recognised as equivalent to a Federal VET Diploma in Health Care.

If this same professional is not, for instance, trained to perform medical-technical acts, he/she may freely work in a non-regulated occupation. If he/she underwent training that is comparable in duration (2 years) with the VET programme for the Federal VET Certificate in Health Care Assistance, he/she may contact SERI – although not mandatory – to request a level certificate or recognition of equivalence with a Federal VET Certificate in Health and Social Care Assistance.

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\(^\text{10}\) Agreement of 21 June 1999 between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Swiss Confederation, of the other, on the free movement of persons (AFMP), SR 0.142.112.681.

\(^\text{11}\) Ordinance of 19 November 2003 on Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPETO, SR 412.101).


\(^\text{14}\) Complete description of the health care worker occupation (in French); see http://www.orientation.ch/dyn/1109.aspx [enter “assc” in the search field].