

Guaranteeing the professional mobility of engineers after Brexit

Engineers Ireland submission

11th December 2018

Overview

Engineers Ireland has reached an Access Pathways Agreement with the UK Engineering Council to guarantee that engineers who apply, are assessed and achieve a registered professional title from Engineers Ireland, will continue to have that registered title recognised if they seek work in the UK post-Brexit. Correspondingly, engineers in the UK, that receive a professional title from one of their 35 professional engineering institutions, will have that title recognised if they wish to come to work in the Republic of Ireland. This Agreement provides certainty to engineering professionals from the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Great Britain to support trade, the development of critical infrastructure and economic development regardless of the outcome of Brexit.

Introduction

Engineers Ireland welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Joint Committee on Housing, Planning and Local Government's report on the impact of Brexit on Ireland's housing system. The Committee is considering a very broad range of issues in the report, though in this submission we would like to focus on one issue which has been of significant concern to Engineers Ireland members as far back as 2016: professional mobility post-Brexit.

The United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union colours every aspect of Ireland's economic future, and the associated uncertainty has been impacting the professional activity of engineers across the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Great Britain. In the context of the major skills shortage facing the Irish construction industry, we believe this should also be of significant concern to the Committee.

In Brexit-themed surveys as far back as 2016, 40% of Engineers Ireland members told us that they were proactively changing their business strategy to adapt to the new economic reality of Brexit. For example, engineering firms are exploring markets beyond the UK, in particular Continental Europe.

When asked about what Engineers Ireland can do to mitigate the effects of Brexit, 81% of engineers agreed that we should put in place stronger bi-lateral links with our peer organisations in the UK to support professional mobility. It is important that our members' ability to work as an engineer across jurisdictions is not impacted negatively by Brexit.

Professional mobility between Ireland and the UK

The Engineering Council is the UK regulatory body for the engineering profession and holds the national registers of 222,000 Engineering Technicians (EngTech), Incorporated Engineers (IEng), Chartered Engineers (CEng) and Information and Communications Technology Technicians (ICTTech).

The Engineering Council grants licences to 35 professional engineering institutions (PEIs), allowing them to assess candidates for inclusion on the national register of professional engineers and technicians. They can also be licensed to accredit academic programmes and professional development schemes.

For many years, Engineers Ireland has had mutual recognition agreements with overseas PEIs, including those in the UK. These agreements ensure the recognition of engineers' professional titles Chartered Engineer (CEng), Associate Engineer (AEng) and/or Engineering Technician (EngTech). We have negotiated international agreements with the following PEIs in the UK:

- The Institution of Civil Engineers
- The Institution of Engineering and Technology
- The Institution of Mechanical Engineers
- The Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers
- The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CEng)
- The Institution of Structural Engineers (candidates must succeed in the relevant IStructE examination)

Over time, these agreements have been superseded by the EU Directive on Professional Qualifications (see below). With the probable Brexit on 29th March 2019, it is vital that we maintain the professional mobility of engineers between Ireland and the UK, particularly if the UK operates outside the EU Directives.

To ensure the continued recognition of Professional Titles held by registered engineers post-Brexit, Engineers Ireland has this month signed an Access Pathways Agreement with the UK Engineering Council.

This Agreement facilitates the continuation and expansion of multiple recognition agreements whereby the two statutory bodies will recognise the professional engineering titles awarded by professional engineering organisations both in Ireland and in the UK.

The Agreement recognises the equivalent holders of professional registered titles in both jurisdictions including:

- Chartered Engineer (CEng)

- Engineering technician (EngTech) and
- Associate Engineer (Ireland) /Incorporated Engineers (UK)

Also included are holders of the UK's Information and Communications Technology Technicians (ICTTech).

The Agreement, put simply, ensures that engineers who apply, are assessed and achieve a registered professional title from Engineers Ireland, will continue to have that registered title recognised if they seek work in the UK post-Brexit. Correspondingly, engineers in the UK, that receive a professional title from one of their 35 professional engineering institutions, will have that title recognised if they wish to come to work in the Republic of Ireland.

Professional mobility in the EU

EU Directives issued in 1989, 1992, 2005 and 2015 provide for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications between EU member states. Provided there are no substantial differences, as defined in the Directives between such a qualification and the CEng title, Engineers Ireland will grant this title to holders of such qualifications.

The European Directive Route to membership reflects Engineers Ireland's obligations under, and opportunities created by the [European Directive 2005/36/EC](#) concerning the recognition of professional qualifications within the EU.

It should be noted that the EU Directive does not guarantee automatic recognition in the host Member State (in this instance Ireland) as there may be a difference between the formal qualifications and professional experience of the applicant and those required by Engineers Ireland (the Competent Authority in the host Member State).

Applicants are required, in accordance with [the regulations](#) for this membership route, to complete and submit the application form for the Registered Title of Chartered Engineer under EU Directive 2005/36/EC accompanied by the relevant support documents and application fee. A checklist of the requirements is included within the application form (see [here](#)).

Professional mobility around the world

The globalised nature of the engineering profession requires the supply of professional engineering talent in all government and industrial sectors across the globe. Engineers Ireland is a signatory to several international agreements which facilitate professional mobility.

Through the Washington Accord, all accredited engineering degree programmes, which we have accredited as satisfying the academic requirements for the Chartered Engineer title, are recognised by professional bodies in other signatory countries as equivalent to their own accredited engineering degree programmes.

Through the Sydney Accord, approved Engineering Technology Programmes (National Diploma in Engineering, BEng Tech degree, BEng Degree, BTech degree) are accepted for membership purposes by the Accord signatories on the same basis as their own accredited Engineering Technology Degree and Diploma Programmes.

Through the Dublin Accord, approved Engineering Technician Programmes (National, Higher or Technician Certificate in Engineering) are accepted for membership purposes by the Accord signatories on the same basis as their own accredited engineering technician certificate programmes.

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About Engineers Ireland

With over 25,000 members from every discipline of engineering, Engineers Ireland is the voice of the engineering profession in Ireland. Engineers Ireland was established in 1835 making us one of the oldest and largest professional bodies in the country. Members come from every discipline of engineering, and range from engineering students to fellows of the profession.

Our responsibility is to

- Promote knowledge of engineering
- Establish and maintain standards of professional engineering and engineering education
- Provide opportunities for Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Maintain standards of professional ethics and conduct
- Ensure that professional titles are granted to qualified candidates
- Act as the authoritative voice of the engineering profession in Ireland

Our Vision Statement

Engineers Ireland: a community of creative professionals delivering solutions for society.

Our Mission Statement

Engineers Ireland is an organisation that enables the engineering community to progress their professional development, make an impact on society and encourage and educate the future generations of engineers.