



# Medical Act 1983

## 1983 CHAPTER 54

### PART VII

#### MISCELLANEOUS AND GENERAL

#### 55 Interpretation.

[<sup>F1</sup>(1)] In this Act—

“acceptable overseas qualification” has the meaning given by [<sup>F2</sup>section 21B(2)] above;

[<sup>F3</sup>“acceptable programme for provisionally registered doctors” has the meaning given by section 10A(1) above;]

[<sup>F4</sup>“adaptation period” means a period of practice, subject to an assessment and, where necessary, accompanied by further training, which is supervised by a fully registered medical practitioner;]

[<sup>F4</sup>“aptitude test” means an assessment, with the aim of determining whether a specified state professional has the knowledge, skills and experience that the General Council consider to be required for practising as a fully registered medical practitioner;]

“additional qualification” has the meaning given by section 16(2) above;

<sup>F5</sup> .....

<sup>F5</sup> .....

[<sup>F6</sup>“CCT” means a certificate of completion of training awarded under section 34L(1);]

[<sup>F7</sup>“competent authority” means any authority or body of a relevant European State designated by that State for the purposes of the Directive as competent to—

- (a) receive or issue evidence of qualifications or other information or documents, or
- (b) receive applications and take the decisions referred to in the Directive, in connection with the practice of medicine;]

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[<sup>F8</sup>“the Directive” means Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7th September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications (OJ No L255, 30.09.2005, p 22), and any reference in this Act to the Directive or to any provision of the Directive is a reference to the Directive, or to that provision of the Directive, as it had effect immediately before IP completion day (but see subsections (2) and (3) below);]

<sup>F9</sup>  
...

[<sup>F10</sup>“Directive 2002/58/EC” means Directive 2002/58/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 2002 concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector (Directive on privacy and electronic communications), as amended from time to time;]

<sup>F11</sup>  
.....

“disqualifying decision” has the meaning given by section 44(2) above;

<sup>F12</sup>  
.....

<sup>F5</sup>  
.....

[<sup>F13</sup>“enforceable EU right” means a right recognised and available in domestic law, immediately before IP completion day, by virtue of section 2(1) of the European Communities Act 1972;]

“exempt person” has the meaning given in section 19(2) above;

<sup>F14</sup>  
.....

[<sup>F15</sup>“fully registered person” means a person for the time being registered under section 3, 14A, [<sup>F16</sup>18A,] 19, 19A, 21B, 27A or 27B above as a fully registered medical practitioner<sup>F17</sup> ... and—]

- (a) so far as mentioned in subsection (3) of section 15 (including that subsection as applied by section [<sup>F18</sup>15A(4), 21 or 21C] above, but not further, includes a person for the time being provisionally registered;

- (b) <sup>F19</sup> .....

and “fully registered” shall be construed accordingly;

“the General Council” means the General Medical Council;

[<sup>F6</sup>“General Practitioner Register” means the register kept by the General Council under section 34C;]

[<sup>F20</sup>“the General Systems Regulations” means the European Union (Recognition of Professional Qualifications) Regulations 2015 (S.I. 2015/2059)

- (a) [<sup>F21</sup>in relation to anything done before IP completion day, as they had effect at that time;

- (b) otherwise, as (and only to the extent that) they have effect, on or after IP completion day, in relation to an entitlement which arose before IP completion day or arises as a result of something done before IP completion day];]

[<sup>F6</sup>“GP Registrar” means a medical practitioner who is being trained in general practice whether as part of training leading to the award of a CCT or otherwise;]

<sup>F22</sup>  
.....

“impaired”, in relation to a person’s fitness to practise, has the meaning given in section 35C(2) above;

<sup>F23</sup>  
.....

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[<sup>F24</sup>“the MPTS” means the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service]

“national”, in relation to a [<sup>F25</sup>relevant European State], has the same meaning as in the [<sup>F26</sup>EU] Treaties, but does not include a person who by virtue of Article 2 of Protocol No. 3 (Channel Islands and Isle of Man) to the Treaty of Accession [<sup>F27</sup>was not, immediately before IP completion day] to benefit from Community provisions relating to the free movement of persons and services;

[<sup>F28</sup>“the necessary knowledge of English”, in relation to a person, means the knowledge of English which, in the interests of himself and his patients, is necessary for the practice of medicine in the United Kingdom;]

[<sup>F6</sup>“NHS consultant” means a consultant other than a locum consultant (but including an honorary consultant) employed for the purposes of providing any service as part of any of the UK health services;]

<sup>F5</sup> .....

<sup>F29</sup> .....

“the prescribed knowledge and skill” has the meaning given by section 5(4) above;

<sup>F30</sup> .....

“the prescribed standard of proficiency” has the meaning given by section 5(4) above;

“primary European qualification” shall be construed in accordance with section 17 above;

“primary United Kingdom qualification” has the meaning given by section 4(3) above;

[<sup>F31</sup>“professional performance” includes a medical practitioner’s professional competence; ]

[<sup>F10</sup>“professional traineeship” means a period of professional practice, carried out under supervision, that—

- (a) constitutes a condition for access to the medical profession in the country in which it is carried out; and
- (b) takes place during or after completion of a course of education leading to an educational qualification pursued for the purpose of entry to that profession;]

“provisionally registered” means provisionally registered under section 15 , [<sup>F32</sup>15A, 21 or 21C] above;

“qualification”, except where the context otherwise requires, means any diploma, degree, fellowship, membership, licence, authority to practise, letters testimonial, certificate or other status or document granted in respect of any branch or branches of medicine by any university, corporation, college or other body or by any department of, or persons acting under the authority of, the government of any country or place;

<sup>F33</sup> .....

[<sup>F6</sup>“recognised specialty” means a specialty which the Privy Council have designated as a recognised specialty by order under section 34D(3);]

[<sup>F34</sup>“the register” means the register of medical practitioners;]

“the Registrar” has the meaning given by section 2(1) above but subject to sub-paragraph (3) of paragraph 16 of Schedule 1 to this Act;

[<sup>F35</sup>“relevant European State” means an EEA State or Switzerland;]

[<sup>F31</sup>“revalidation” has the meaning given in section 29A above;]

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F36

[F6“Specialist Register” means the register kept by the General Council under section 34D;]

[F4“specified state professional” means a person who holds a specified state qualification;]

[F4“specified state qualification” means a medical qualification granted in one of the states specified in Schedule 1 to the Recognition of Professional Qualifications and Implementation of International Recognition Agreements (Amendment) Regulations 2023;]

[F31“the statutory committees” has the meaning given in section 1(3A) above;]

[F10“third country” means a country other than a relevant European State;]

[F37“the UK GDPR” has the same meaning as in Parts 5 to 7 of the Data Protection Act 2018 (see section 3(10) and (14) of that Act);]

[F6“the UK health services” means—

- (a) the health service as defined by section 275(1) of the National Health Service Act 2006 or section 206(1) of the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006 ;
- (b) the health service as defined by section 108(1) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 ; and
- (c) any of the health services under any enactment which extends to Northern Ireland and which corresponds to section 1(1) of the National Health Service Act 2006;]

[F38(1ZA) For the purposes of this Act an application for registration is made when it is received by the Registrar.]

[F39(1A) References in this Act to the over-arching objective are to the over-arching objective of the General Council under section 1(1A) (read with section 1(1B)).]

[F40(2) In relation to anything done before the adoption by the Council of Directive [93/16/EEC](#), references in this Act to [F41the Directive], or to any provision of [F41the Directive], shall be construed as references to, or to the corresponding provision of, the following Directives as for the time being amended, namely—

- (a) Council Directive No. [75/362/EEC](#) concerning the mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualifications in medicine; and
- (b) Council Directive No. [75/363/EEC](#) concerning the coordination of provisions in respect of activities of doctors.]

[F42(3) In relation to anything done—

- (a) before the adoption by the Council and the European Parliament of the Directive, but
- (b) after the adoption by the Council of Directive [93/16/EEC](#),

references in this Act to the Directive, or to any provision of the Directive, shall be construed as references to, or to any corresponding provision of, Directive [93/16/EEC](#) as for the time being amended.

(4) In this section, “Directive [93/16/EEC](#)” means Council Directive [93/16/EEC](#) of 5th April 1993 to facilitate the free movement of doctors and the mutual recognition of their diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualifications (OJ No. L165, 7.7.93, p.1).]

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### Textual Amendments

- F1** S. 55 renumbered as s. 55(1) (10.7.1996) by [S.I. 1996/1591](#), reg. 7, Sch. 2 para. 13(1)
- F2** Words in s. 55(1) substituted (19.7.2006 for specified purposes, 19.10.2007 in so far as not already in force as notified in the London Gazette dated 20.7.2007) by [The Medical Act 1983 \(Amendment\) and Miscellaneous Amendments Order 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1914\)](#), arts. 1(2)(b)(c)(3), **41(a)**
- F3** Words in s. 55(1) inserted (19.7.2006 for specified purposes, 1.8.2007 in so far as not already in force as notified in the London Gazette dated 20.7.2007) by [The Medical Act 1983 \(Amendment\) and Miscellaneous Amendments Order 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1914\)](#), art. 1(2)(b)(c)(3), **33(a)**
- F4** Words in s. 55(1) inserted (1.12.2023) by [The Recognition of Professional Qualifications and Implementation of International Recognition Agreements \(Amendment\) Regulations 2023 \(S.I. 2023/1286\)](#), reg. 1, **Sch. 3 para. 15**
- F5** Words in s. 55(1) omitted (1.1.2009) by virtue of [The Health Care and Associated Professions \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) Order 2008 \(S.I. 2008/1774\)](#), art. 1(5), **Sch. 1 para. 20(b)**; [S.I. 2008/2556](#), art. 2(2)(a)(ii)
- F6** Words in s. 55(1) inserted (11.2.2010 for specified purposes, 1.4.2010 in so far as not already in force) by [The General and Specialist Medical Practice \(Education, Training and Qualifications\) Order 2010 \(S.I. 2010/234\)](#), art. 1(3)(4), **Sch. 1 para. 16**; [S.I. 2010/478](#), art. 2(b)
- F7** Words in s. 55(1) inserted (3.12.2007) by [The European Qualifications \(Health and Social Care Professions\) Regulations 2007 \(S.I. 2007/3101\)](#), regs. 1(2), **29(a)(i)**
- F8** Words in s. 55(1) substituted (31.12.2020) by [The European Qualifications \(Health and Social Care Professions\) \(Amendment etc.\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019 \(S.I. 2019/593\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 30(2)(a)** (with reg. 12A, Sch. 1 Pt. 2) (as amended by [S.I. 2020/1394](#), regs. 4, 8(2), 9); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F9** Words in s. 55(1) omitted (25.5.2018) by virtue of [Data Protection Act 2018 \(c. 12\)](#), s. 212(1), **Sch. 19 para. 23** (with ss. 117, 209, 210); [S.I. 2018/625](#), reg. 2(1)(g)
- F10** Words in s. 55(1) inserted (18.11.2016) by [The European Qualifications \(Health and Social Care Professions\) Regulations 2016 \(S.I. 2016/1030\)](#), regs. 1, **9(3)** (with reg. 155)
- F11** Words in s. 55(1) omitted (3.12.2007) by virtue of [The European Qualifications \(Health and Social Care Professions\) Regulations 2007 \(S.I. 2007/3101\)](#), regs. 1(2), **29(a)(ii)**
- F12** Words in s. 55(1) omitted (3.12.2007) by virtue of [The European Qualifications \(Health and Social Care Professions\) Regulations 2007 \(S.I. 2007/3101\)](#), regs. 1(2), **29(a)(iii)**
- F13** Words in s. 55(1) inserted (31.12.2020) by [The European Qualifications \(Health and Social Care Professions\) \(Amendment etc.\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019 \(S.I. 2019/593\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 30(2)(b)** (with reg. 12A, Sch. 1 Pt. 2) (as amended by [S.I. 2020/1394](#), regs. 4, 8(2), 9); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F14** Definition in s. 55(1) repealed (10.7.1996) by [S.I. 1996/1591](#), reg. 7, **Sch. 2 para. 13(2)(c)(f)**
- F15** Words in s. 55(1) substituted (3.12.2007) by [The European Qualifications \(Health and Social Care Professions\) Regulations 2007 \(S.I. 2007/3101\)](#), regs. 1(2), **29(a)(iv)**
- F16** Words in s. 55(1) inserted (9.7.2008) by [The Health Care and Associated Professions \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) Order 2008 \(S.I. 2008/1774\)](#), art. 1(2)(b), **Sch. 1 para. 20(a)**
- F17** Words in s. 55(1) omitted (31.12.2020) by virtue of [The European Qualifications \(Health and Social Care Professions\) \(Amendment etc.\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019 \(S.I. 2019/593\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 30(2)(c)** (with reg. 12A, Sch. 1 Pt. 2) (as amended by [S.I. 2020/1394](#), regs. 4, 9); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F18** Words in s. 55(1) substituted (19.7.2006 for specified purposes, 19.10.2007 in so far as not already in force as notified in the London Gazette dated 20.7.2007) by [The Medical Act 1983 \(Amendment\) and Miscellaneous Amendments Order 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1914\)](#), arts. 1(2)(b)(c)(3), **41(b)(ii)**
- F19** Words in s. 55(1) omitted (19.7.2006 for specified purposes, 19.10.2007 in so far as not already in force as notified in the London Gazette dated 20.7.2007) by virtue of [The Medical Act 1983 \(Amendment\) and Miscellaneous Amendments Order 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1914\)](#), arts. 1(2)(b)(c)(3), **15(a)**

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- F20** Words in s. 55(1) substituted (18.11.2016) by The European Qualifications (Health and Social Care Professions) Regulations 2016 (S.I. 2016/1030), regs. 1, **9(2)** (with reg. 155)
- F21** Words in s. 55(1) inserted (31.12.2020) by The European Qualifications (Health and Social Care Professions) (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/593), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 30(2)(d)** (with reg. 12A, Sch. 1 Pt. 2) (as amended by S.I. 2020/1394, regs. 4, 8(2), 9); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F22** Words in s. 55(1) omitted (31.12.2020) by virtue of The European Qualifications (Health and Social Care Professions) (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/593), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 30(2)(e)** (with reg. 12A, Sch. 1 Pt. 2) (as amended by S.I. 2020/1394, regs. 4, 9); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F23** Words in s. 55(1) omitted (19.7.2006 for specified purposes, 19.10.2007 in so far as not already in force as notified in the London Gazette dated 20.7.2007) by virtue of The Medical Act 1983 (Amendment) and Miscellaneous Amendments Order 2006 (S.I. 2006/1914), arts. 1(2)(b)(c)(3), **15(b)**
- F24** Words in s. 55(1) inserted (31.12.2015) by The General Medical Council (Fitness to Practise and Over-arching Objective) and the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (References to Court) Order 2015 (S.I. 2015/794), arts. 1(3), **2(3)**; S.I. 2015/1952, art. 2(a)
- F25** Words in s. 55(1) substituted (3.12.2007) by The European Qualifications (Health and Social Care Professions) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007/3101), regs. 1(2), **29(a)(vi)**
- F26** Words in Act substituted (22.4.2011) by The Treaty of Lisbon (Changes in Terminology) Order 2011 (S.I. 2011/1043), arts. 2, **3**, 6 (with arts. 3(2)(3), 4(2), 6(4)(5))
- F27** Words in s. 55(1) substituted (31.12.2020) by The European Qualifications (Health and Social Care Professions) (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/593), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 30(2)(f)** (with reg. 12A, Sch. 1 Pt. 2) (as amended by S.I. 2020/1394, regs. 4, 8(2), 9); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F28** Words in s. 55(1) substituted (29.4.2014) by The Medical Act 1983 (Amendment) (Knowledge of English) Order 2014 (S.I. 2014/1101), arts. 1(1), **10(2)** (with arts. 11, 12)
- F29** Words in s. 55(1) omitted (19.7.2006 for specified purposes, 19.10.2007 in so far as not already in force as notified in the London Gazette dated 20.7.2007) by virtue of The Medical Act 1983 (Amendment) and Miscellaneous Amendments Order 2006 (S.I. 2006/1914), arts. 1(2)(b)(c)(3), **15(c)**
- F30** Words in s. 55(1) omitted (19.7.2006 for specified purposes, 1.8.2007 in so far as not already in force as notified in the London Gazette dated 20.7.2007) by virtue of The Medical Act 1983 (Amendment) and Miscellaneous Amendments Order 2006 (S.I. 2006/1914), art. 1(2)(b)(c)(3), **33(b)**
- F31** Words in s. 55(1) inserted (17.12.2002 for specified purposes, 7.7.2004, 1.11.2004, 8.9.2009 for specified purposes as notified in the London Gazette dated 21.8.2009) by The Medical Act 1983 (Amendment) Order 2002 (S.I. 2002/3135), arts. 1(2)(h), **15(6)(c)** (with Sch. 2)
- F32** Words in s. 55(1) substituted (19.7.2006 for specified purposes, 19.10.2007 in so far as not already in force as notified in the London Gazette dated 20.7.2007) by The Medical Act 1983 (Amendment) and Miscellaneous Amendments Order 2006 (S.I. 2006/1914), arts. 1(2)(b)(c)(3), **41(c)**
- F33** In s. 55(1) definition of "recognised overseas qualification" omitted (17.12.2002) by virtue of The Medical Act 1983 (Amendment) Order 2002 (S.I. 2002/3135), arts. 1(2)(h), **15(6)(a)** (with transitional provisions in Sch. 2)
- F34** Words in s. 55(1) substituted (19.7.2006 for specified purposes, 19.10.2007 in so far as not already in force as notified in the London Gazette dated 20.7.2007) by The Medical Act 1983 (Amendment) and Miscellaneous Amendments Order 2006 (S.I. 2006/1914), arts. 1(2)(b)(c)(3), **15(d)**
- F35** Words in s. 55(1) inserted (3.12.2007) by The European Qualifications (Health and Social Care Professions) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007/3101), regs. 1(2), **29(a)(vii)**
- F36** Definition in s. 55(1) repealed (10.7.1996) by S.I. 1996/1591, reg. 7, **Sch. 2 para. 13(2)(c)(f)**
- F37** Words in s. 55(1) inserted (31.12.2020) by The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/419), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 3 para. 11** (with Sch. 3 para. 112); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F38** S. 55(1ZA) inserted (31.12.2020) by The European Qualifications (Health and Social Care Professions) (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/593), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para.**

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**30(3)** (with reg. 12A, Sch. 1 Pt. 2) (as amended by S.I. 2020/1394, regs. 4, 9); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)

- F39** S. 55(1A) inserted (3.8.2015) by The General Medical Council (Fitness to Practise and Over-arching Objective) and the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (References to Court) Order 2015 (S.I. 2015/794), arts. 1(3), **21(12)** (with art. 1(4)); S.I. 2015/1579, art. 2(l)
- F40** S. 55(2) inserted (10.7.1996) by S.I. 1996/1591, reg. 7, **Sch. 2 para. 13(3)**
- F41** Words in s. 55(2) substituted (3.12.2007) by The European Qualifications (Health and Social Care Professions) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007/3101), regs. 1(2), **29(b)**
- F42** S. 55(3)(4) inserted (3.12.2007) by The European Qualifications (Health and Social Care Professions) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007/3101), regs. 1(2), **29(c)**

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**Changes and effects yet to be applied to :**

- s. 55(1) words inserted by [2008 c. 14 Sch. 7 para. 19](#)

**Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:**

- Act words substituted by [2005 c. 4 Sch. 11 para. 6](#)

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- s. 29B(2A)-(2C) inserted by [S.I. 2008/3131 Sch. 1 para. 9\(2\)](#)
- s. 29B(2A)(a) word substituted by [S.I. 2010/234 Sch. 1 para. 2](#)
- s. 29B(3A) inserted by [S.I. 2008/3131 Sch. 1 para. 9\(3\)](#)
- s. 29E(1)(d)(e) inserted by [S.I. 2008/3131 Sch. 1 para. 12\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 29E(2)(e)(f) inserted by [S.I. 2008/3131 Sch. 1 para. 12\(3\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 29F(1)(d)(e) inserted by [S.I. 2008/3131 Sch. 1 para. 14\(3\)](#)
- s. 35C(2)(f)(g) inserted by [S.I. 2008/1774 Sch. 1 para. 15](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. It was due to come into force on the coming into force of s. 44(1) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (c. 47), see art. 1(4). S. 44(1) was repealed without ever being in force on 10.9.2012 by 2012 c. 9, s. 75(6), Sch. 10 Pt. 5; S.I. 2012/2234, art. 2)
- s. 35ZA inserted by [2008 c. 14 Sch. 7 para. 4](#)
- Sch. 1 para. 1A(1)(b)(iv)(v) inserted by [S.I. 2024/374 Sch. 5 para. 1\(2\)\(b\)\(iii\)](#)
- Sch. 3B para. 5(d)(e) inserted by [S.I. 2008/3131 Sch. 1 para. 19\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- Sch. 3B para. 6(1)(d)(e) inserted by [S.I. 2008/3131 Sch. 1 para. 19\(3\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#)
- Sch. 3B para. 6(2)(d)(e) inserted by [S.I. 2008/3131 Sch. 1 para. 19\(3\)\(b\)\(ii\)](#)
- Sch. 3B para. 7(1)(d)(e) inserted by [S.I. 2008/3131 Sch. 1 para. 19\(4\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#)
- Sch. 3B para. 7(2)(c) and word inserted by [S.I. 2008/3131 Sch. 1 para. 19\(4\)\(b\)\(ii\)](#)