

18 January 2016 saw the introduction of an alternative method of recognition through the European Professional Card (EPC). The EPC is not a physical card but takes the form of online certificate that confirms recognition of the professional qualification. The whole process is carried out online with the applicant, submitting an application through a specially created online portal. This applies to both those professionals wishing to provide a temporary service in another Member State as well as those wishing to establish themselves in a Host Member State.

Who can apply?

Professionals must either be EU Country Nationals or enjoy EU rights.

Is the EPC available for all professions?

EPCs are issued with regards to the following professions only:

- Nurses responsible for general care;
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Is the EPC valid in all Member States?

The EPC issued will only be valid for that Member State the professional wishes to practice in. If the professional wishes to provide a service in multiple Member States, a separate EPC will be needed for each Member State.

Can employers check the whether a professional is in possession of a valid EPC?

Yes, employers can check whether the professional has been issued with an EPC and if this is still valid.

Can I start practising as soon as the EPC is issued?

While the EPC confirms that the administrative checks for recognition of professional qualifications have been successfully carried out, access to the profession may, however, still be dependent on satisfying other criteria such as language proficiency.

Does the EPC replace the 'traditional' method of recognition?

The EPC does not replace the 'traditional' procedures of recognition of professional qualifications but provides an alternative route for applicants wishing to have their qualifications recognised in another Member State.

Where can I obtain more information on the EPC and the application process?

Further information on the EPC is available on http://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/work/professional-qualifications/european-professional-card/index_en.htm.